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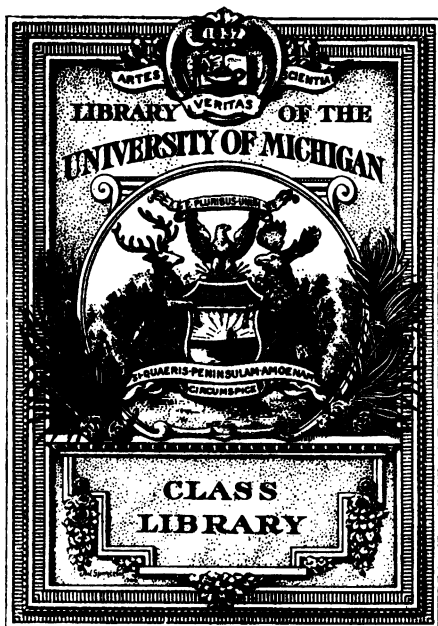
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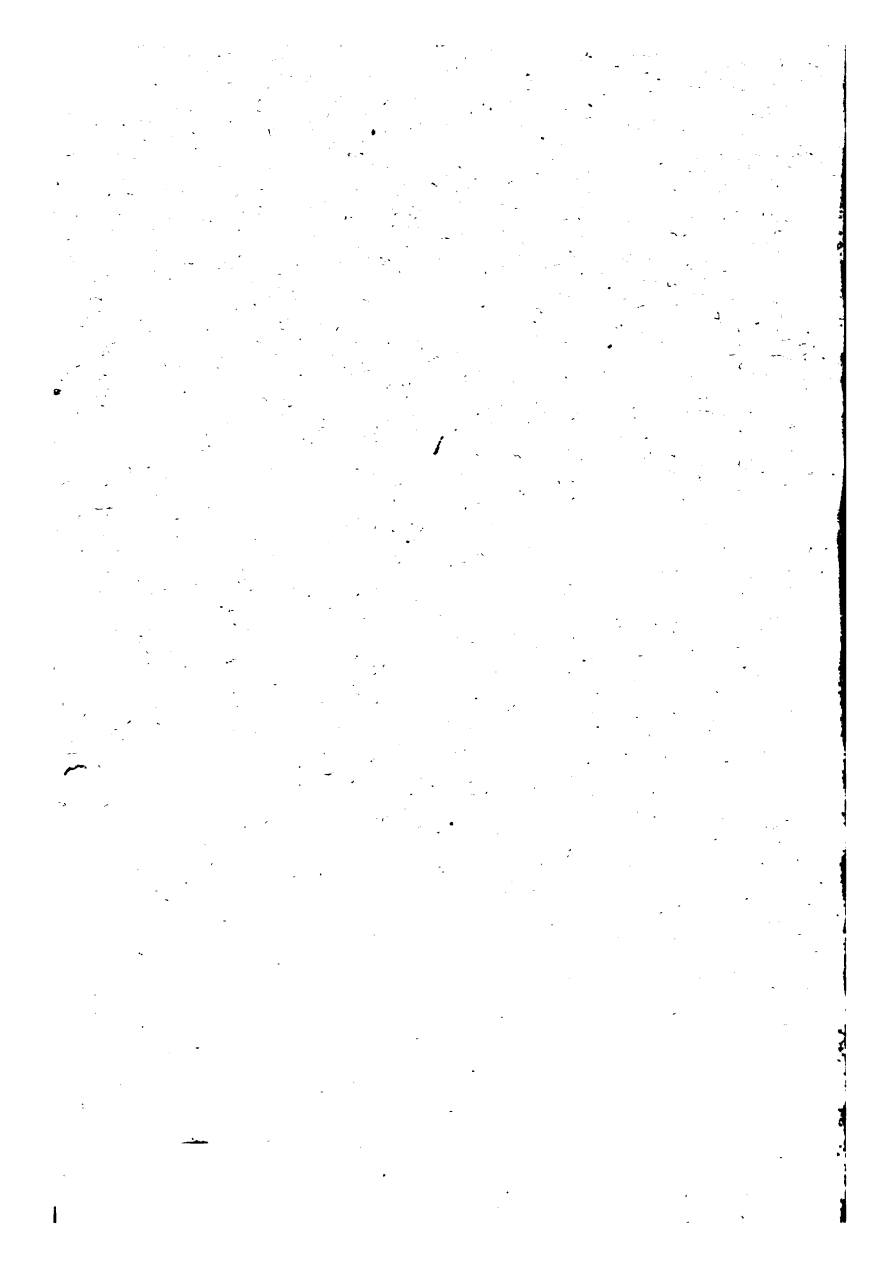
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THE
AUGSBURG CONFESSION,
AND
FORMULA
FOR THE
GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE
OF THE,
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF THE
GENERAL SYNOD
IN THE
UNITED STATES.

PHILADELPHIA:
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AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

ALL regularly constituted Lutheran Synods, connected with the General Synod, "receive and hold, with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of our fathers, *the word of God*, as contained in the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, *as the only infallible rule of faith and practice*, and the *Augsburg Confession*, as a correct exhibition of the *fundamental doctrines of the Divine word*, and of the faith of our Church founded upon that word." Constitution of the General Synod, as adopted in 1868 and 1869. See Art. II., Sect. 3.

PART FIRST.

ARTICLE I.—OF GOD.

OUR churches with one accord teach, that the decree of the Council of Nice, concerning the unity of the Divine essence, and concerning the three persons, is true, and ought to be confidently believed, viz.: that there is one Divine essence, which is called and is God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, the Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible: and yet, that there are

three persons, who are of the same essence and power, and are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. And the term person they use in the same sense in which it is employed by ecclesiastical writers on this subject: to signify, not a part or quality of something else, but that which subsists of itself.

They condemn all heresies, which have sprung up against this article, such as that of the Manichæans, who maintained the existence of two principles, an evil and a good one. Likewise the Valentinians, Arians, Eunomians, Mohammedans, and all such like. They condemn also the earlier and later Samosateans, who, whilst they contend for the existence of only one Person, subtilely and impiously assert of the Word and Holy Spirit, that they are not distinct persons, but that the Word signifies the vocal word, and the Spirit the motion created in things.

ARTICLE II.—OF ORIGINAL SIN.

Our churches likewise teach, that since the fall of Adam, all men who are naturally engendered, are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God or confidence towards Him, and with sinful propensities: and that this disease, or original sin, is truly sin, and still condemns and causes eternal death to those who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit.

They condemn the Pelagians and others, who deny that natural depravity is sin, and who, to the disparagement of the glory of Christ's merits and benefits, contend that man may be justified before God by the powers of his own reason.

**ARTICLE III.—OF THE SON OF GOD AND HIS
MEDIATORIAL WORK.**

They likewise teach, that the Word, that is, the Son of God, assumed human nature, in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary, so that there are two natures, human and divine, inseparably united in unity of person, one Christ, true God and true man, who was born of the Virgin Mary; who truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried, that he might reconcile the Father to us, and be a sacrifice not only for original sin, but also for all actual sins of men. The same descended into hell and truly rose again the third day; then ascended to heaven, that he might sit at the right hand of the Father, might reign forever over all creatures, and might sanctify those who believe in him, by sending into their hearts the Holy Spirit, who may govern, console, quicken, and defend them against the devil and the power of sin. The same Christ will return again openly, that he may judge the living and the dead, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed.

ARTICLE IV.—OF JUSTIFICATION.

They in like manner teach, that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works; but that they are justified gratuitously for Christ's sake, through faith; when they believe, that they are received into favor, and that their sins are remitted for the sake of Christ, who made satisfaction

for our transgressions by his death. This faith God imputes for righteousness before him. (Rom. iii. and iv.)

ARTICLE V.—OF THE MINISTERIAL OFFICE.

In order that we may obtain this faith, the ministry has been instituted, for teaching the gospel, and administering the sacraments. For through the instrumentality of the word and sacraments, the Holy Spirit is given, who, when and where it pleases God, works faith in those who hear the gospel, namely, that God, for Christ's sake, and not on account of any merit in us, justifies those who believe that they are received into favor for Christ's sake.

They condemn the Anabaptists and others, who suppose that the Holy Spirit is given to men by their own preparations and works, without the external word.

ARTICLE VI.—CONCERNING NEW OBEDIENCE.

They likewise teach, that this faith must bring forth good fruits; and that it is our duty to perform those good works, which God has commanded, because it is his will, and not in the expectation of thereby meriting justification before him. For, remission of sins and justification are secured by faith; as the declaration of Christ testifies: "When ye shall have done all those things, say, we are unprofitable servants."

The same thing is taught by the ancient ecclesiastical writers: for Ambrose says, "This has been ordained

by God, that he who believes in Christ shall be saved without works, receiving remission of sins gratuitously through faith alone."

ARTICLE VII.—OF THE CHURCH.

They likewise teach, that there will always be one holy church. But the church is the congregation of the saints, in which the gospel is correctly taught, and the sacraments are properly administered. And for the true unity of the church, it is sufficient to agree concerning the doctrines of the gospel, and the administration of the sacraments. Nor is it necessary that the same human traditions, that is, rites and ceremonies instituted by men, should be everywhere observed. As Paul says: "One faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all," etc.

ARTICLE VIII.—WHAT THE CHURCH IS.

Although the church is properly a congregation of saints and true believers; yet as, in the present life, many hypocrites and wicked men are mingled with them, it is lawful for us also to receive the sacraments, though administered by bad men, agreeably to the declaration of our Saviour, "that the Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat," etc. And on account of the appointment and command of Christ, both the word and sacraments are efficacious, even when administered by wicked men.

They condemn the Donatists and such like, who denied that it is lawful to make use of the ministry of

wicked men in the church, and who thought the ministry of such useless and without efficacy.

ARTICLE IX.—CONCERNING BAPTISM.

Concerning baptism our churches teach, that it is necessary to salvation; that through baptism, the grace of God is offered. And that children are to be baptized, who being by baptism offered to God, are received into His favor.

Therefore we reject the doctrine of the Anabaptists, who reject the baptism of children.

ARTICLE X.—OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

In regard to the Lord's supper, they teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present, and are dispensed to the communicants in the Lord's supper: and they disapprove those who teach otherwise.

ARTICLE XI.—OF CONFESSION.

Concerning confession, they teach, that private absolution ought to be retained in the churches; although an enumeration of all our offences is not necessary in confession. For this is impossible, according to the declaration of the Psalmist: "Who can understand his errors?" (Ps. xix. 12.)

ARTICLE XII.—OF REPENTANCE.

Concerning repentance they teach, that those who have relapsed into sin after baptism, may at any time

obtain pardon, when they repent : and that the church ought to grant [absolution] to such as return to repentance. But repentance properly consists of two parts. The one is contrition, or terror of conscience, on account of known sin. The other is faith, which is obtained from the gospel [or absolution], which believes that pardon for sin is bestowed for Christ's sake ; and comforts the conscience, and frees it from terrors. Such repentance ought to be succeeded by good works as its fruits.

They condemn the Anabaptists who deny that those who have once been justified, can lose the Holy Spirit. In like manner those who contend that some persons attain so high a degree of perfection in this life, that they cannot sin. They reject also the Novatians, who are unwilling to absolve such as have backslidden after baptism, even if they repent : as also those who teach that remission of sins is not obtained through faith ; but require us to merit grace by our good works.

ARTICLE XIII. — OF THE USE OF THE SACRAMENTS.

Concerning the use of the sacraments our churches teach, that they were instituted not only as marks of a Christian profession amongst men ; but rather as signs and evidences of the will of God towards us, for the purpose of exciting and confirming the faith of those who use them. Hence the sacraments ought to be received with faith in the promises which are exhibited and set forth by them.

They therefore condemn those who teach that the sacraments justify (*ex opere operato*), by the mere performance of the act, and who do not teach that faith, which believes our sins to be forgiven, is required in the use of the sacraments.

ARTICLE XIV.—OF CHURCH ORDERS.

Concerning church orders they teach, that no person ought publicly to teach in the church, or to administer the sacraments, without a regular call.

ARTICLE XV.—OF CHURCH RITES.

Concerning church rites they teach, that those rites ought to be observed, which can be attended to without sin, and which promote peace and good order in the church, such as certain holy-days, festivals, etc. Concerning such things, however, men are cautioned, lest consciences be burdened, as though such observances were necessary to salvation. They are also admonished that human traditions, instituted with a view to propitiate God, to merit His favor, and make satisfaction for sins, are contrary to the gospel and the doctrine of faith. Wherefore vows and traditions concerning meats, days, etc., instituted to merit grace and make satisfaction for sins, are useless, and contrary to the gospel.

ARTICLE XVI.—OF CIVIL AFFAIRS.

Concerning civil affairs our churches teach that legitimate civil enactments are good works of God; that it is lawful for Christians to hold civil offices, to

pronounce judgment, and decide cases according to the imperial and other existing laws; to inflict just punishment, wage just wars, and serve in them; to make lawful contracts; hold property; to make oath when required by the magistrates, to marry, and be married.

They condemn the Anabaptists, who forbid to Christians the performance of these civil duties. They also condemn those who make evangelical perfection consist not in the fear of God and in faith, but in the abandonment of all civil duties: because the gospel teaches the necessity of ceaseless righteousness of heart, whilst it does not abolish the duties of civil and domestic life, but specially requires them to be observed as ordinances of God, and performed in the spirit of Christian love. Hence Christians ought necessarily to yield obedience to their civil officers and laws; unless when they command something sinful; for then they ought to obey God rather than man. (Acts v. 29.)

ARTICLE XVII.—OF CHRIST'S RETURN TO JUDGMENT.

Our churches also teach, that at the end of the world, Christ will appear for judgment; that He will raise all the dead; that He will bestow upon the pious and elect eternal life and endless joys, but will condemn wicked men and devils to be punished without end.

They reject the opinions of the Anabaptists, who maintain that the punishment of devils and condemned men will have an end; in like manner they condemn

those who circulate the Judaizing notions, that before the resurrection of the dead the righteous will possess the government of the world, and the wicked be everywhere suppressed.

ARTICLE XVIII.—OF FREE WILL.

Concerning free will they teach, that the human will possesses some liberty for the performance of civil duties, and for the choice of those things subject to reason. But it does not possess the power, without the influence of the Holy Spirit, of fulfilling the righteousness of God, or spiritual righteousness: for the natural man receiveth not the things which are of the Spirit of God: but this is accomplished in the heart, when the Holy Spirit is received through the word. The same is declared by Augustine in so many words: "We confess that all men have a free will, which possesses the judgment of reason, by which they cannot indeed, without the divine aid, either begin or certainly accomplish what is becoming in things relating to God; but only in works of the present life, as well good as evil. In good works, I say, which arise from our natural goodness, such as to choose to labor in the field, to eat and drink, to choose to have a friend, to have clothing, to build a house, to take a wife, to feed cattle, to learn various and useful arts, or to do any good thing relative to this life; all which things, however, do not exist without the divine government; yea, they exist and begin to be from Him and through Him. And in evil works (men have a free will), such as to

choose to worship an idol, to will to commit murder, etc.”

They condemn the Pelagians, and others, who teach that we are able, by the mere powers of nature, without the aid of the Holy Spirit, to love God above all things, and to do His commands, as to the substance of our actions. For, although nature may be able, after a certain manner, to perform external actions, such as to abstain from theft, from murder, etc., yet it cannot perform the inner motions, such as the fear of God, faith in God, chastity, patience, etc.

ARTICLE XIX.—OF THE CAUSE OF SIN.

Concerning the cause of sin they teach, that although God is the Creator and Preserver of nature, the cause of sin must be sought in the depraved will of the wicked, namely, of the devil and wicked men, which, when destitute of divine aid, turns itself away from God: as Christ says, “When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own.” (John viii. 44.)

ARTICLE XX.—OF GOOD WORKS.

Our writers are falsely accused of prohibiting good works. For their writings on the ten commandments, and other similar subjects, show that they have given good instructions concerning all the different situations and duties of life, and taught what kinds of life, in any particular calling, are pleasing to God. Concerning these things preachers formerly taught very little, but urged certain puerile and unnecessary works, such

as certain holy-days, fasts, brotherhoods, pilgrimages, worship of saints, rosaries, monastic vows, etc. These useless works, our adversaries, having been admonished, now unlearn, and no longer teach as formerly. Moreover, they now begin to make mention of faith, about which formerly there was a marvellous silence observed. They now teach, that we are not justified by works alone, but conjoin faith and works, and maintain that we are justified by faith and works. This doctrine is more tolerable than the former, and can impart more consolation to the mind than their old doctrine. Inasmuch, then, as the doctrine concerning faith, which should be regarded as the principal one in the church, had so long been unknown ; as all must confess, that concerning the righteousness of faith, the most profound silence reigned in their sermons, and the doctrine concerning works alone was discussed in the churches ; our divines have admonished the churches as follows :

First, that our works cannot reconcile God, or merit the remission of sins, and grace, and justification : but this we obtain only by faith, when we believe that we are received into favor, for Christ's sake, who alone is appointed our mediator and propitiatory sacrifice, by whom the Father can be reconciled. He, therefore, who expects to merit grace by his works, casts contempt on the merits and grace of Christ, and is seeking the way to God, in his own strength, without Christ ; though Christ has said of Himself, " I am the way, the truth, and the life." This doctrine concerning faith is incessantly inculcated by the apostle Paul (Ephes. ii.), " Ye are saved by grace, through faith, and that not

of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works," etc. And lest any one should cavil at our interpretation as new, this whole matter is supported by the testimony of the fathers. For Augustine, in many volumes, defends grace, and the righteousness of faith, against the merit of good works. And Ambrose, on the calling of the Gentiles, etc., inculcates the same doctrine. For thus he says, concerning the calling of the Gentiles: "Redemption by the blood of Christ would be of little value, nor would the honor of human works be subordinated to the mercy of God, if justification, which is of grace, were merited by previous works, so as to be not the gift of him that bestows it, but the reward of him that earned it." But although this doctrine is despised by the inexperienced, the consciences of the pious and timid find it a source of much consolation, for they cannot attain peace of conscience by any works, but by faith alone, when they confidently believe that, for Christ's sake, they have a reconciled God. Thus Paul teaches us, (Rom. v.,) "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." This whole doctrine must be referred to the conflict of a terrified, conscience-alarmed sinner, nor can it be otherwise understood. Hence the inexperienced and worldly-minded are much mistaken, who vainly imagine that the righteousness of the Christian is nothing else than what in common life and in the language of philosophy is termed morality.

Formerly the consciences of men were harassed by the doctrine of works, nor did they hear any consolation from the gospel. Some conscience drove into deserts, and into monasteries, hoping there to merit the

divine favor by a monastic life. Others invented other kinds of works, to merit grace, and make satisfaction for their sins. There was therefore the greatest necessity to teach and set forth anew this doctrine concerning faith in Christ; in order that fearful consciences might find consolation, and know that justification and the remission of sins are obtained by faith in Christ. The people are also now instructed, that the word faith does not signify a mere historical belief, such as wicked men and devils have; but signifies the faith which believes not only the history, but also the effect of the history, namely the article of remission of sins, namely that through Christ we have grace, righteousness, and remission of sins.

Now he who knows that the Father is reconciled to him through Christ, has a true knowledge of God, trusts in His providence, and calls upon His name: in fine, he is not without God, as the Gentiles are. For the devils and wicked men cannot believe this article concerning the remission of sins. But they hate God as an enemy, do not call upon His name nor expect anything good at His hands. Augustine also thus admonishes and teaches the reader, that in the Scriptures this word faith does not signify knowledge, such as the wicked possess, but that confidence or trust, by which alarmed sinners are comforted and lifted up. We moreover teach, that it is necessary to perform good works, not because we expect to merit grace by them, but because it is the will of God. Pardon of sins and grace are obtained only by faith. And because the Holy Spirit is received by faith, our hearts are now

renovated, and new affections produced, that they are able to bring forth good works. Accordingly Ambrose states, faith is the source of a good will and an upright life. For the powers of man, without the Holy Spirit, are full of sinful affections, and too feeble to perform works that are good in the sight of God. They are moreover under the influence of Satan, who urges men to various sins, and impious opinions, and open crimes; as may be seen in the examples of the philosophers who, though they endeavored to lead moral lives, failed to accomplish their design, and were guilty of many notorious crimes. Such is the weakness of man, when he undertakes to govern himself by his own strength without faith and the Holy Spirit.

From all this it is manifest, that our doctrine, instead of being charged with prohibiting good works, ought much rather to be commended for teaching the manner in which truly good works can be performed. For without faith, human nature is incapable of performing the duties either of the first or second table. Without faith, man does not call upon God, nor expect anything from Him, nor bear the cross: but seeks help from men, and reposes on human aid. Hence when faith and confidence in God are wanting, all evil desires and human counsels reign in the heart; wherefore Christ also says, "without me ye can do nothing," (John xv. ;) and the church sings, Without Thy favor there is nothing good in man.

ARTICLE XXI.—OF THE INVOCATION OF SAINTS

Concerning the invocation of saints our churches teach, that the saints may be held in remembrance, in order that we may, each in his own calling, imitate their faith and good works; as that the emperor may imitate the example of David, in carrying on war to expel the Turks from our country; for each of them is a king. But the Scripture does not teach us to invoke saints or to seek aid from them. For it proposes Christ to us as our only Mediator, Propitiation, High Priest, and Intercessor. On Him we are to call, and He promises that He will hear our prayers, and highly approves of this worship, viz.: that He should be called upon in every affliction (1 John ii.): "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father," etc.

This is about the sum of our doctrines, from which it is evident, that they contain nothing inconsistent with the Scriptures, or with either the catholic or the Roman church, so far as is known from the (ancient) writers (or Fathers). Under these circumstances, they certainly judge harshly, who would have us regarded as heretics. But the difference of opinion between us relates to certain abuses, which have crept into the churches without any good authority; in regard to which, if we do differ, the bishops ought to treat with lenity and tolerate us, on account of the confession which we have just made. For, even the canons of the church are not so rigid as to require everywhere the same rites; nor have the rites of all the churches ever been the same. Nevertheless, the ancient rites of

the church we have in general carefully retained. For it is a slanderous charge, that all the ancient ceremonies and institutions are abolished in our churches. But there was a general complaint, that some abuses had crept into the customary rites ; and these, because we could not with a good conscience retain them, we have in part corrected.

AUGSBURG CONFESSION.

PART SECOND.

ABUSES CORRECTED.

INASMUCH as there is nothing contained in the Articles of Faith of our churches inconsistent with the Holy Scriptures or the universal Christian Church, and as we have merely corrected some abuses, a part of which had in the course of time crept into the church, whilst others were forcibly introduced into it; necessity demands that we should give some account of them, and assign the reasons which induced us to admit the alterations, in order that your imperial majesty may perceive that nothing was done in this matter in an unchristian or presumptuous manner, but that we were compelled to admit these alterations by the word of God, which is justly to be held in higher regard than any customs of the church.

ARTICLE XXII. (I.)—OF COMMUNION IN BOTH KINDS.

In our churches, communion is administered to the laity in both kinds, because this is a manifest command and precept of Christ. (Matt. xxvi. 27.) "Drink ye all of it." In this passage Christ teaches, in the plainest terms, that they should all drink out of the cup.

And in order that no one may be able to cavil at these words, and explain them as referring to the clergy alone, Paul informs us that the entire church at Corinth received the sacrament in both kinds. (1 Cor. xi. 26.) And this custom was retained in the church for a long time, as can be proved by history, and the writings of the Fathers. Cyprian frequently mentions the fact that in his day the cup was given



to the laity. St. Jerome also says, the priests, who administer the sacrament, dispense the blood of Christ to the people. And Pope Gelasius himself commanded that the sacrament should not be divided (*distinct. 2, de consecrat. cap. comperimus*). There is * no canon extant, which commands that one kind alone should be received. Nor can it be ascertained when, or by whom, the custom of receiving bread alone was introduced, although Cardinal Cusanus mentions the time when it was approved. Now it is evident that such a custom, introduced contrary to the divine command, and also in opposition to the ancient canons, is wrong. It was therefore improper to coerce and oppress the conscience of those who wished to receive the sacrament agreeably to the appointment of Christ, and compel them to violate the institution of our Lord. And inasmuch as the dividing of the sacrament is contrary to its institution by Christ, the custom of carrying about the host in procession is omitted amongst us.

ARTICLE XXIII. (II.) — THE MARRIAGE OF PRIESTS.

There has been general complaint among persons of every rank on account of the scandalous licentiousness and lawless lives of the priests; who were guilty of lewdness, and whose excesses had risen to the highest pitch. In order to put an end to such odious conduct, to adultery, and other lewd practices, several of our ministers have entered the matrimonial state. They themselves declare, that in taking the step, they were influenced by the dictates of conscience, and a sacred regard for the holy volume, which expressly informs us, that marriage was appointed of God to prevent licentiousness: as Paul says, (1 Cor. vii. 2,) "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife." Again, "it is better to marry than to burn," (Cor. vii. 9,) and according to the declaration of Christ that not all men can receive this word. (Matt. xix: 12.) In this passage Christ Himself, who well knew what was in man, declares that few persons are qualified to live in celibacy; for God created us male and female. (Gen i. 27.) And experience has abundantly proved how

* This was the case when this Confession was made, but the Council of Trent subsequently enacted one.

vain is the attempt to alter the nature or meliorate the character of God's creatures by mere human purposes or vows, without a peculiar gift or grace of God. It is notorious that the effort has been prejudicial to purity of morals: and in how many cases it has occasioned distress of mind, and the most terrific apprehensions of conscience, is known by the confessions of numerous individuals. Since, then, the word and law of God cannot be altered by human vows or enactments, the priests, for this and other reasons, have entered into the conjugal state.

It is moreover evident from the testimony of history and the writings of the fathers, that it was customary in former ages for priests and deacons to be married. Hence the injunction of Paul to Timothy, (1 Tim. iii. 2,) "A bishop then must be blameless, *the husband of one wife.*" It is but four hundred years since the clergy in Germany were compelled by force to abandon the matrimonial life, and submit to a vow of celibacy; and so generally and resolutely did they resist this tyranny, that the archbishop of Mayence, who published this new papal edict, was wellnigh losing his life in a commotion excited by the measure. And in so precipitate and arbitrary a manner was that decree executed, that the Pope not only prohibited all future marriage of the priests, but even cruelly rent asunder the social ties of those who had long been living in the bonds of lawful wedlock, thus violating alike not only the laws of God and the natural and civil rights of the citizen, but even the canons which the popes themselves made, and the decrees of the most celebrated councils!

It is the deliberate and well-known opinion of many distinguished, pious, and judicious men, that this compulsory celibacy and prohibition of matrimony (which God Himself instituted and left optional) has been productive of no good, but is the prolific source of numerous and abominable vices. Yea, even one of the popes, Pius II., himself declared, as history informs us, that though there may be several reasons why the marriage of priests should be prohibited, there are many more and weightier ones why it should not. And doubtless this was the deliberate declaration of Pius, who was a sensible and wise man. We would therefore confidently trust that your Majesty, as a Christian Emperor, will graciously reflect that in these latter days, to which reference

is made in the sacred volume, the world has become still more degenerate, and mankind more frail and liable to temptation. It will be well to beware, lest by the prohibition of marriage, licentiousness and vice be promoted in the German States. For on this subject no man can devise better or more salutary laws than those enacted by God, who himself instituted marriage for the promotion of virtue amongst men. The ancient canons also enjoin that the rigor of human enactments must on some subjects be accommodated to the infirmities of human nature, in order to avoid greater evils.

Such a course would in this case be very necessary and Christian: for what injury could result to the church, from the marriage of the clergy and others who are to serve in the church? Yea, it is probable that the church will be but imperfectly supplied with ministers, should this rigorous prohibition of marriage be continued.

If, therefore, it is evident from the divine word and command, that matrimony is lawful in ministers and ecclesiastics, and history teaches that their practice formerly was conformed to this precept; if it is evident that the vow of celibacy has been productive of the most scandalous and unchristian conduct, of adultery, unheard-of licentiousness, and other abominable crimes prevalent among the clergy, as some of the dignitaries at Rome have themselves often confessed and lamented; it is a lamentable thing that the Christian estate of matrimony has not only been forbidden, but in some places speedy punishment been presumptuously inflicted, as though it were a heinous crime!

Matrimony is, moreover, declared a lawful and honorable estate by the laws of your Imperial Majesty, and by the code of every empire in which justice and law prevail. Of late, however, innocent subjects, and especially ministers, are cruelly tormented on account of their marriage. Nor is such conduct a violation of the divine laws alone; it is equally opposed to the canons of the church. The apostle Paul denominates that a doctrine of devils which forbids marriage.* And Christ says,† “The devil is a murderer from the beginning.” For that may well be regarded as a doctrine of devils which forbids marriage and enforces the prohibition by the shedding of blood.

* Tim. iv. 1-3.

† John viii. 44.

But as no human law can abrogate or change a command of God, neither can any vows produce this effect. Therefore Cyprian admonishes that if any woman do not observe the vow of chastity, it is better for her to be married. In lib. i. epist. ii., he says, "But if they either will not, or cannot preserve chastity, it is better that they marry, than that they fall into the fire by their lusts: and let them beware, that they do not cause scandal to the brethren and sisters." And all the canons observe more lenity and justice towards those who assumed the vow of celibacy in youth, as is generally the case with priests and monks.

ARTICLE XXIV. (III.) — OF THE MASS.

It is unjustly charged against our churches, that they have abolished the Mass. For it is notorious that the Mass is celebrated among us with greater devotion and seriousness than by our opponents. Our people are also instructed repeatedly, and with the utmost diligence, concerning the design and proper mode of receiving the holy sacrament: namely, to comfort alarmed consciences; by which means the people are attracted to the communion and the Mass. We at the same time give instruction against other erroneous doctrines concerning the sacrament. In the public ceremonies of the Mass, also, no other perceptible change has been made than that at several places German hymns are sung along with the Latin in order to instruct and exercise the people; since all ceremonies are chiefly designed to teach the people what it is necessary for them to know concerning Christ.

But as the Mass has heretofore evidently been abused in various ways, so that an annual fair was made, at which masses were bought and sold, and the greater part of them in all churches were performed for money; this abuse has repeatedly been censured by learned and pious men of former times. And since our ministers have preached, and the priests have been reminded of, the fearful threat which should naturally influence every Christian—that whoever receives the sacrament unworthily is guilty of the body and blood of Christ—these money-masses and closet-masses, which were hitherto performed from coercion, for the sake of money and the benefices, have ceased in our churches.

At the same time that monstrous error was condemned, which taught that Christ the Lord has made satisfaction by his death *only for natural depravity*, and had instituted the Mass as a sacrifice for all other sins; and thus made the Mass a sacrifice for the living and the dead, thereby to take away sin and reconcile God. Hence, also, arose the controversy, whether a mass performed for a number of persons collectively was as efficacious as a separate mass for each individual. Hence originated the incalculable multitude of masses, by which works men expected to obtain everything they needed from God, and thus faith in Christ and true worship of God were forgotten.

Instruction was therefore given, as recognized by the necessity of the case, that men might understand the proper use of the sacrament. And first, the Scriptures abundantly teach that there is no other sacrifice for original sin, or other sin, than the death of Christ alone; for thus it is written to the Hebrews, ch. ix. 25-28, and x. 10-14, that Christ offered himself once as a sacrifice, and thereby made satisfaction for all sin. It is an unheard-of novelty in the church, to teach that the death of Christ made satisfaction only for original sin, and not also for all other sins. Hence, it is hoped that every one will understand that this was not condemned unjustly.

Secondly.—St. Paul teaches that we obtain grace before God through faith, and not by works. (Rom. iii. 22-28). In manifest opposition to this is that abuse of the mass, when men vainly expect to obtain grace by this work. For it is well known that the mass has been employed in order to remove sin, and to obtain from God grace and all blessings, not only for the priests themselves, but also for the whole world, and for others, both living and dead.

Thirdly.—The holy sacrament was instituted, not as a sacrifice for sin, for the sacrifice had been made before; but in order that our faith may be awakened, and consciences comforted: for they are reminded by the sacrament that grace and pardon of sin are promised to them by Christ. Hence the sacrament requires faith, and is used without any benefit by those who are destitute of faith.

Inasmuch, then, as the Mass is not a sacrifice for others, either the living or the dead, to take away their sins, but is to be a communion at which the priest and others receive

the sacrament for themselves, our custom is, that on holy days, and also at other times, if communicants are present, we hold mass, and admit to the communion such as desire it.

We therefore retain the proper use of the Mass, as it was held in former times in the church, as can be proved from St. Paul, 1 Cor. ii., and also from the writings of many fathers. For St. Chrysostom states that the priest stood daily and invited some to communion, and forbade others from approaching. The ancient canons also show that one of the priests performed the Mass and administered the communion to the other priests and deacons; for the canon of Nice uses this language: "The deacons shall ordinarily receive the sacrament after the priests from the bishop or priest."

Inasmuch as no innovations have been attempted upon the customs of the ancient church, and no perceptible change has been made in the public ceremonies of the Mass, except that the other unnecessary masses, perhaps introduced by abuse, beside the parish Mass, have been abolished, this mode of celebrating Mass ought, in justice, not to be condemned as heretical and unchristian. For in former times, also, Mass was not celebrated every day, even in the large churches, where large assemblies were convened on the days of public meeting; as the Tripartite History, lib. 9, states that in Alexandria, it was customary on Wednesday and Friday to read and expound the Scriptures, and to perform all other parts of religious worship, without the mass.

ARTICLE XXV. (IV.)—OF CONFESSION.

Confession is not abolished by the ministers of our churches. For it is our custom not to administer the sacrament to those who have not previously been confessed and absolved. At the same time, the people are diligently instructed, how consoling the word of absolution is, and how highly absolution should be valued; as being, not the word or voice of the present (officiating) human being, but the word of that God who pardons sin; for it is pronounced in God's stead and by His authority. How consoling and necessary this command and the power of the keys are for alarmed consciences, is diligently taught, and also that God requires us to believe this absolution, just as though his voice re-

sounded from heaven, and to have the joyful assurance that by this faith we obtain pardon. Of these necessary articles ministers formerly said nothing in their instructions on Confession; but they merely tortured the consciences of their hearers with long details of their sins, with making satisfaction, with indulgences, with pilgrimages, etc. And many of our opponents themselves confess, that our instructions and practice concerning true Christian Penitence are better than had been inculcated a long time before.

Accordingly we teach concerning Confession, that no one should be urged to enumerate his individual sins, for this is impossible, as the Psalmist says (Ps. xix. 12): "Who can understand his errors?" And Jeremiah (xvii. 9) says: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Poor human nature is therefore so deeply involved in sins, that we cannot see or know them all, so that if we were absolved only from those which we can enumerate, we should have but little relief. It is therefore unnecessary to urge the people to enumerate their individual sins. This accords with the teachings of the fathers, as we learn in the *Distinct. 1, de Pœnitentia*, where these words of Chrysostom are adduced: "I do not say that you should publicly expose yourself, nor accuse yourself to another, or confess your guilt; but give heed to the prophet who says, 'Commit thy way unto the Lord.' (Ps. xxxvii. 5.) Therefore confess unto God, the Lord, the faithful Judge, in addition to your prayer. Do not repeat your sins with your tongue, but in your heart." Here it is evident that Chrysostom did not exact an enumeration of our sins. Thus also the gloss in *Decretis de Pœnitentia, Distinct. 5*, teaches, that confession is not commanded in Scripture, but has been instituted by the church. Yet do our preachers diligently teach that Confession should be retained, for the sake of the absolution which is the principal and most valuable thing in it, to bring consolation to alarmed consciences, as well as for several other reasons.

ARTICLE XXVI. (V.) — OF DIVERSITY OF MEATS.

The doctrine was formerly inculcated that the diversity of meats and other human traditions were useful, in order to merit grace and make satisfaction for sin. Hence new fasts, new ceremonies, and new orders were daily invented

and strenuously insisted on as necessary parts of worship, the neglect of which was attended with heinous guilt. Thus occasion was given to many scandalous corruptions in the church.

In the first place, the grace of Christ and the doctrine concerning faith are thereby obscured. Yet these doctrines are inculcated in the gospel with great solemnity, the merits of Christ are represented as of the utmost importance, and faith in the Redeemer is placed far above all human merits. Hence the apostle Paul inveighs bitterly against the observance of the Mosaic ritual and human traditions, in order to teach us that we acquire righteousness and grace not by our own works, but by faith in Christ. This doctrine was, however, entirely obscured by the notion that grace must be merited by legal observances, fasts, diversities of meats, habits, etc.

Secondly.—Such traditions were calculated to obscure the divine law; for these traditions are elevated far above the word of God. No one was regarded as leading a Christian life, who did not observe these holy-days, and pray and fast and dress in this peculiar manner, which was termed a spiritual Christian life. Moreover, truly good works were regarded as a worldly matter, such as fulfilling the duties of our calling, the labors of a father to support his family and educate them in the fear of the Lord, that mothers should bear children and take charge of them, that a prince and the government should rule the country, etc. Such works which God has commanded, were pronounced worldly and imperfect; but these traditions had the credit of being the only holy and perfect works. For these reasons, to the making of such traditions there was no end.

Thirdly.—These traditions became extremely burdensome to the consciences of men. For it was not possible to observe them all, and yet the people were taught to regard them as necessary parts of worship. *Gerson* asserts that many were thus driven to despair, and some put an end to their own existence because they heard of no consolation in the grace of Christ. How much the consciences of men were perplexed on these subjects, is evident from the writings of those divines (summistas) who undertook to compile these traditions and seek for mitigations of them (*eniacuatus*) to relieve the conscience. So complicated an undertaking

did they find it, that in the mean time the salutary doctrines of the gospel on more important subjects, such as faith and consolation in affliction, and others of like import, were totally neglected. Accordingly many pious men of those times complained that these traditions served only to excite contention and prevent devout souls from attaining the true knowledge of Christ. Gerson and several others uttered bitter complaints on this subject. And Augustine also complains that the consciences of men ought not to be burdened with these numerous and useless traditions.

Our divines were therefore compelled by necessity, and not by contempt of their spiritual superiors, to correct the erroneous views which had grown out of the misapprehension of these traditions. For the gospel absolutely requires that the doctrine of faith be steadily inculcated in the churches: but this doctrine cannot be rightly understood by those who expect to merit grace by works of their own appointment. We therefore teach that the observance of these human traditions cannot merit grace, or atone for sins, or reconcile us unto God; and ought therefore not to be represented as a necessary part of Christian duty. The proofs of this position are derived from Scripture. Christ excuses * his apostles for not observing the traditions, saying, *In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* As he calls this a vain service, it cannot be a necessary one. And again, *Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man.*† Again, Paul says, *The kingdom of God is not meat and drink.*‡ *Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, etc.*§ Peter says, *Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved.*|| Here Peter expressly forbids that the consciences of men should be burdened with mere external ceremonies, either those of the Mosaic ritual or others. And Paul calls those prohibitions which forbid meats and to be married, "*doctrines of devils.*"¶ For it is diametrically contrary to the gospel either to institute or perform such works with a view to merit pardon of sin, or under the impression that no one can be a Christian who does not observe them.

* Matt. xv. 3, 9.

‡ Col. ii. 16.

† Matt. xv. 11.

|| Acts xv. 10.

‡ Rom. xiv. 17.

¶ 1 Tim. iv. 1, 3.

The charge, however, that we forbid the mortification of our sinful propensities, as Jovian asserts, is groundless. For our writers have always given instruction concerning the cross which it is the duty of Christians to bear. We moreover teach, that it is the duty of every one by fasting and other exercises to avoid giving any occasion to sin, but not to merit grace by such works. But this watchfulness over our body is to be observed always, not on particular days only. On this subject Christ says, *Take heed to yourselves lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting.** Again, *The devils are not cast out except by fasting and prayer.*† And Paul says, *I keep under my body and bring it into subjection*; ‡ by which he wishes to intimate that this bodily discipline is not designed to merit grace, but to keep the body in a suitable condition for the several duties of our calling. We do not therefore object to fasting itself, but that it is represented as a necessary duty, and that specific days have been fixed for its performance, and that thus the consciences of men become confused.

We also retain many ceremonies and traditions, such as the order (of lessons) in the Mass, and other hymns, festivals, etc., which tend to preserve order in the church. At the same time the people are taught that such external religious services do not render them holy before God, and must be observed without burdening the conscience; in such a manner, that if they are omitted without giving offence, no sin is committed. The same liberty in external ceremonies the ancient fathers also possessed; for in the East the festival of Easter was celebrated at a different time from that observed at Rome. And as some were disposed to regard this difference as a division in the church, they were admonished by others that uniformity in such customs is not necessary. *Irenæus* says: "Diversity in fasting does not destroy unity of faith." Thus also *Distinctio* 12 affirms concerning such diversity in human ordinances, that they are not inconsistent with the unity of the Christian church; and the *Histor Tripartita* collects a number of conflicting ecclesiastical customs, and subjoins this useful observation: "The design of the apostles was not to institute holy-days, but to inculcate faith and love."

* Luke xxi. 34.

† Matt. xvii. 21.

‡ 1 Cor. ix. 27.

ARTICLE XXVII. (VI.)—OF MONASTIC VOWS.

In speaking of monasticism, it will be requisite to consider the light in which it has been viewed, the disorders which have occurred in monasteries, and the fact that many things are yet daily done in them contrary both to the word of God and the papal enactments. In the time of St. Augustine, the monastic life was optional; subsequently, when the doctrine and the discipline of monasteries were corrupted, vows were invented in order that the evil might be remedied as it were by a species of incarceration. In addition to these monastic vows, numerous other burdens were invented, by which many persons were oppressed even during their minority. Many adopted this mode of life through ignorance, who, though of riper years, were not fully acquainted with their infirmity. All these, in whatever way they may have been enticed or coerced into these vows, are compelled to remain, although even the papal regulations would liberate many of them. And this has been more oppressive in nunneries than in monasteries, although it would have been becoming to spare the females, as being more delicate. This severity has frequently been censured by many pious persons in former times; for they well knew that both boys and girls were often thrust into these monasteries merely for the purpose of being supported. They saw also the deplorable consequences of this course, what offences and burdening of conscience it caused, and many have complained that the canons have been so grossly disregarded in so dangerous a matter. Monastic vows were also represented in a very improper light, so as to be disapproved even by some of the monks themselves. They were represented as equal to baptism, and as a method of deserving pardon and justification before God; yea, as being not only a meritorious righteousness, but also the fulfilment of the commands and counsels of the gospel, and as superior to baptism. They also taught that the monastic life was more meritorious than all the other professions which God appointed, such as that of minister and pastor, rulers, princes, lords, etc., etc., as their own books will prove, and they cannot deny. In short, he that has been enticed into a monastery, will learn but little of Christ. Formerly schools were kept in monasteries, in which the Scriptures and other

things useful to the Christian church were taught, so that ministers and bishops could be selected from them; but now the case is very different. Formerly they entered monasteries for the purpose of studying the Scriptures; but now they pretend that the monastic life is so meritorious as to deserve the grace of God; yea, that it is a state of perfection far superior to those modes of life which God Himself has commanded. All this we here adduce without any deduction, in order that it may be the better understood what and how we preach and teach.

In the first place, we teach that all who do not feel inclined to a life of celibacy, have the power and right to marry. Their vows to the contrary cannot annul the command of God.* "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." To this course we are urged and compelled, both by the divine precepts, and the general nature of man, agreeably to the declaration of God Himself: "It is not good for man to be alone, I will make an help-meet for him."†

Now what can be adduced against this? However highly vows and duty may be extolled, they may be dressed up as much as possible, yet the commands of God cannot be abrogated by them. The doctors affirm that vows are not binding which contravene papal laws — how much less can they be obligatory or possess force against the law of God?

If there were no other reasons why the obligation of vows might be annulled, the popes would not have granted dispensations from them; for it does not become any man to abolish duties arising from the laws of God. Therefore, the popes have wisely considered that in this obligation equity must be observed, and have repeatedly granted dispensations, as in the case of the king of Arragon, and many others. Since, therefore, dispensations have been granted for the attainment of temporal objects, how much more reasonable is it to grant them on account of some necessity of the soul?

Again, why do our opponents so strenuously insist on the inviolability of vows, without first inquiring whether the vow is a proper one? For a vow should contemplate possible things, and be voluntary and unconstrained. But how

* 1 Cor. vii. 2.

† Gen. ii. 18.

perpetual chastity is in the power and ability of man is well understood : and there are few, either males or females, who have made the monastic vow deliberately and of their own accord. They are persuaded to take the vows of monastic life before they have attained their proper senses ; and sometimes also they are compelled and urged to it. Therefore it is not just that men should dispute so rashly and severely of the obligation of vows, seeing all concede that it is contrary to the nature and form of a vow, that it should not be made voluntarily, with proper counsel and due deliberation.

Several canons and papal laws annul those vows which were made under fifteen years of age: for they hold that persons under that age have not sufficient understanding to decide upon their entire course of life.

Another canon concedes still more years to human infirmity : for it forbids any one to make the monastic vow under eighteen years of age. By this canon the greater part of the inmates of monastic institutions are excused, and have cause to leave them, for they generally entered them in childhood, prior to that age. Finally, if even the violation of monastic vows might be censured, it would still not follow that their marriages should be dissolved. For Augustine, in his 27 Quæst. 1 cap. Nuptiarum, says such marriages should not be dissolved. And St. Augustine has always been held in high repute in the Christian church, although some have since taught differently.

Although the divine precept concerning marriage has already absolved many from their monastic vows, our writers assign many other reasons to demonstrate that they are not binding. Every species of worship invented by men, without a divine precept, in order to merit justification and grace, is contrary to God, and against His will and gospel. As Christ himself says, "But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."* Coincident with this is the doctrine of Paul, that we should not seek our righteousness in our own services, invented by men ; that true righteousness in the sight of God must be sought in faith, and in our confidence in the mercy of God through Christ, his only Son. But it is notorious that the monks

* Matt. xv. 9.

represent their invented righteousness as amply sufficient to merit the pardon of sin and divine grace. But what is this else than to diminish the glory of the merits of Christ, and to deny the righteousness of faith? Hence it follows that these vows were unjust and a false worship, and of course not binding. For a vow to do anything contrary to the divine command, that is, an *oath improper in itself, is not obligatory, as even the canons declare; for an oath cannot bind us to sin.*

St. Paul says to the Galatians,* "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Those, therefore, who would be justified by their vows, have abandoned the grace of God through Christ: for they rob Christ of his glory, who alone can justify us, and transfer this glory to their vows and monastic life.

It cannot be denied that the monks taught and preached that they are justified and merit pardon of sin by their vows and monastic life; yea, they have invented and affirmed things still more unbecoming, namely, that they can communicate their good works to others. Now, if any one desired to urge this matter with rigor and dress up all these charges against them, how many things could he not collect, of which the monks themselves would now be ashamed, and which they would gladly deny? Above all this, they have persuaded the people that these spurious religious orders constitute Christian perfection. This is certainly to glory in works that we may be justified by them. Nor is this a small offence in the Christian church, to inculcate on the people such a system of worship, invented by man and unauthorized by the law of God, and to teach them that such worship makes men pious and just before God. For the righteousness of faith, which should be most insisted on in the church, thus becomes obscured when the people are made to stare at this rare angelic spirituality, and false pretence of poverty, humility, and chastity.

It is, moreover, a corruption of the divine law and of true worship, to hold up the monastic life to the people as the only perfect one. For Christian perfection consists in this, that we love and fear God with all our heart, and yet combine with it sincere reliance and faith in him through Christ:

* Gal. v. 4.

that it is our privilege and duty to supplicate the throne of grace for such things as we need in all our trials, and in our respective callings; and to give diligence in the performance of good works. It is in this that true perfection consists, and the true worship of God, but not in begging, or in a black or white hood.

But the common people are led into many injurious opinions by the false commendation of monastic life. When they hear a life of celibacy applauded without measure, it follows that their conscience is oppressed in their married state; for when the common people hear that the mendicants alone are to be regarded as perfect, they cannot feel assured that they are not guilty of sin, in holding worldly possessions and pursuing a worldly calling. When the people hear that it is merely a counsel not to take revenge, the consequence is, that some imagine they can take revenge in private life without sin. Some suppose that revenge is entirely unbecoming in a Christian, even in a Christian government. And we read of many examples of persons who have forsaken their wives and children, and also the duties of civil government, and confined themselves in monasteries. They regarded this as fleeing from the world, and seeking such a life as is more pleasing to God than any other. They could not understand that it is our duty to serve God according to those commands which he has given, and not those invented by men. But that is certainly a good and perfect state of life which is sanctioned by the law of God, whilst that is a dangerous condition or mode of life which is unauthorized by the divine law.

It was necessary to give good instructions to the people on such subjects. Gerson also, in former times, censured the error of the monks in regard to perfection, and shows that in his day it was a novelty to assert that the monastic life is a state of perfection. So numerous are the ungodly opinions and errors which adhere to monastic vows, that they justify the sinner and make him pious before God; that they constitute Christian perfection; that in taking them, we obey both the counsels and precepts of the gospel that they have works of supererogation which man does not owe to God.

Now, as all this is false, groundless, and fictitious, it follows that monastic vows are void and not binding.

ARTICLE XXVIII. (VII.) — OF THE POWER OF THE BISHOPS OR CLERGY.

Much has been written on this subject in former times, and an unnatural commixture of civil and ecclesiastical power has been effected. Extensive wars and rebellions have thus been produced by the pontiffs, who, under pretence of authority from Christ, have not only invented new methods of worship, and thus under penalty of excommunication oppressed the consciences of men, but even presumed to dethrone kings and emperors at pleasure, and to place others in their stead! This presumption has in former times often been censured by learned and pious men. Hence we have been compelled to point out the lines of distinction between civil and ecclesiastical power; and have inculcated the duty of paying due respect to each, as two of the highest gifts of God upon earth. Accordingly we teach, that the power of the keys or of the bishops, according to the gospel, consists in a divine command and commission to preach the gospel, to remit and retain sins, and to administer the sacraments. For Christ sent forth his disciples with the command, "As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you—receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained."* But this power of the keys or clergy is exercised entirely by the doctrine and preaching of God's word and the administration of the sacraments to few or many, according to our calling. For thereby are conferred not temporal but eternal blessings, such as everlasting righteousness, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life. These blessings cannot be obtained in any other way than through the ministry of the word and the sacraments. For the apostle Paul says, "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Inasmuch, then, as the power of the church or of the clergy confers only spiritual gifts, and is exerted through the preaching of the gospel, it cannot interfere with the civil government. For the latter relates to matters entirely different, and protects not the souls of men, but their bodies, against external violence, by the sword and bodily penalties.

The civil and ecclesiastical governments ought, therefore, not

*1 John xx. 21.

to be united. The church is commanded to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments; and ought, therefore, *not to interfere with the powers of the civil government, by dethroning or making kings, by absolving subjects from allegiance to the civil government, nor enact laws on subjects belonging to civil legislation.* Christ Himself has taught us, "My kingdom is not of this world;" * and, "Who hath made me a judge over you?" † And Paul to the Philippians, ‡ says, "Our citizenship (thus has Luther correctly rendered πολιτευμα, *bürger-schaft*, and not conversation, as in our English version) is in heaven." And again, "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God." §

This, according to our view, is the difference between the civil and ecclesiastical power; and both are to be regarded and respected as the greatest gifts of God on earth. If ministers have any civil office at all, they derive it from their political government, as the gift of emperors and kings, and it has nothing to do with their office as ministers of the gospel. The bishop's (i. e., minister's) office, according to divine right, is, therefore, to preach the gospel, to remit sins, to judge of doctrine, and reject such doctrines as are contrary to the gospel, to exclude open transgressors from the Christian church, without employing any human power, but simply by the word of God. It is the duty of the church to give heed to the bishops, according to the declaration of Christ, "He that heareth you, heareth me." || But if they teach or appoint anything contrary to the gospel, we are commanded by God Himself not to obey them: "Beware of false prophets." ¶ And Paul says, "But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." ** And to the Corinthians †† he says, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." Also, (v. 10:) "According to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction." The ecclesiastical law also commands the same thing in 2 Quest. 7, in

* Johr. xviii. 36.

‡ 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

** Gal. i. 8.

† Luke xii. 14.

|| Luke x. 16.

†† 2 Cor. xiii. 8

‡ Phil. iii. 20.

¶ Matt. vii. 15.

Cap. Sacerdotes, and in Cap. Oves. St. Augustine says, in his Epistle against Petilian, "Nor is it our duty to obey those bishops who have been duly elected, if they err, or teach or command anything contrary to the word of God."

The other powers and jurisdiction of the bishops (or clergy) in several matters, such as marriage and tithes, they derive from human governments. But if the ecclesiastical judges are negligent in their office, it is the duty of the princes to adjudge justice to their subjects, whether they do it reluctantly or not, for the sake of preventing discord and dissatisfaction in the country.

Farther, it is disputed whether bishops also have power to prescribe ceremonies in the church, such as ordinances concerning meats, holy-days, and different grades of ecclesiastical officers. Those who ascribe this power to the bishops, appeal to the declaration of Christ, (John xvi. 12.) "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth." They also adduce the example (of the Apostles) in Acts xv. 20, where they prohibited the use of blood and things strangled. In addition to this, they allege that the Sabbath was changed into Sunday (the Lord's day) contrary to the decalogue, as they consider it; and no example is urged and referred to so frequently as the change of the Sabbath, by which they wish to establish the point that the power of the church is great, as she dispensed with the decalogue, and made a change in it.

But on this question we teach that the bishops have no power to determine and appoint anything contrary to the gospel, as is above proved, and as the ecclesiastical code inculcates throughout the whole of the *9th Distinction*. Now it is manifestly contrary to the word of God, to make or enjoin laws with the view of thereby making satisfaction for sin and obtaining grace; for the honor of the Saviour's merits is tarnished when we presume to merit grace by such human appointments. It is also notorious that this opinion in the Christian church has given rise to numberless human traditions, whilst the doctrine concerning faith and the righteousness of faith was entirely suppressed. Every day new holy-days and new fasts were prescribed, new ceremonies and new honors to the saints were appointed, in order, by these works, to merit grace and every blessing of

God. Again, those who set up human traditions also violate the law of God when they attribute sin to meats, to particular days, and other similar things; thus burdening Christians with the *servitude of the law*, as though they were bound, in order to merit the grace of God, to practise a mode of worship similar to the Levitical service; which worship, they allege, God commanded the apostles and bishops to establish. Thus some writers contend, and it is quite credible, that some bishops (Latin copy, *popes*) were deceived by the example of the Mosaic law. Hence originated the numberless traditions, that it is a mortal sin to do any work on holy-days, even if done without any offence to others; that it is a mortal sin to omit the canonical hours; that some kinds of food pollute the conscience; that fasting is such a work as will reconcile God; that sin in a reserved case cannot be pardoned, unless the consent of the reserver be first sought, whereas the ecclesiastical code speaks not of the reservation of the guilt, but of the penalty imposed by the church.

For whence have the bishops the authority and power to impose such injunctions upon Christians—to ensnare the consciences of men? St. Peter forbids the imposition of a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, (Acts xv. 10;) and St. Paul says to the Corinthians (2 Cor. xiii. 10) that “power was given to him unto edification, and not to destruction.” Why, then, do they multiply sins by such traditions? But we have clear passages of the sacred Scriptures which forbid the appointment of such traditions, as means to merit the grace of God, or as necessary to salvation. Thus St. Paul to the Colossians (ii. 16) says, “Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of a new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.” “Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,” “Which say, Touch not this, neither eat nor drink this, handle not that, which all perish in the using, and are commandments and doctrines of men, which have a show of truth.” In like manner, Paul to Titus (i. 14) publicly forbids that they should “give heed to Jewish parables and commandments of men that turn from the truth.”

Thus Christ, also, Himself, speaking of those who urge the people to the observance of human ordinances, (Matt. xv. 14,) says, “Let them alone, they are blind leaders of the blind.”

He rejects such worship, and declares, "Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." But if bishops had the power to burden the churches with innumerable traditions, and to ensnare the conscience, why do the Scriptures so often forbid the making of human traditions, or paying any regard to them? Why do they term them doctrines of devils? Would the Holy Spirit have uttered all these admonitions in vain?

Therefore, since such ordinances which have been appointed, and been represented as necessary to appease God and merit grace, are opposed to the gospel, it is utterly unbecoming in the bishops to enforce such worship. For it is necessary to preserve the doctrine of Christian liberty in the Christian church; namely, that the servitude of the law is not necessary to justification; as St. Paul writes to the Galatians, (v. 1,) "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." For it must always be retained as the cardinal article of the gospel, that we obtain the grace of God by faith in Christ, without any merit of our own, and do not merit it by any works appointed by men.

And what are we to believe concerning *Sunday* (the Lord's day) and other similar ordinances and ceremonies of the church? To this inquiry we reply, the bishops and clergy may make regulations, that order may be observed in the church, not with the view of thereby obtaining the grace of God, nor in order thus to make satisfaction for sins, nor to bind the conscience, to hold and regard this as a necessary worship of God, or to believe that they would commit sin if they violated these regulations without offence to others. Thus St. Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xi. 5) has ordained that women should have their heads covered in the congregation; also, that the ministers should not all speak at the same time in the congregation, but in an orderly manner, one after another.

It is becoming in a Christian congregation to observe such order, for the sake of love and peace, and to obey the bishops and clergy in these cases, and to observe these regulations so far as not to give offence to one another, so that there may be no disorder or unbecoming conduct in the church. Nevertheless, the consciences of men must not be oppressed, by representing these things as necessary to salvation, or teaching that they are guilty of sin, if they break these re-

gulations without offence to others; for no one affirms that a woman commits sin who goes out with her head uncovered, without giving offence to the people. Such also is the ordinance concerning Sunday, Easter, Whitsunday, and similar festivals and customs. *For those who suppose that the ordinance concerning Sunday instead of Sabbath, is enacted as necessary, are greatly mistaken.* For the Holy Scripture has abolished the Sabbath, and teaches that all the ceremonies of the old law may be omitted, since the publication of the gospel. And yet, as it was necessary to appoint a certain day, in order that the people might know when they should assemble, the *Christian church* has appointed Sunday (the Lord's day) for this purpose, and to this change she was the more inclined and willing, that the people might have an example of Christian liberty, and might know that the observance of *neither the Sabbath nor any other day is necessary*. There have been numerous erroneous disputations published, concerning the change of the law, the ceremonies of the New Testament, and the change of the Sabbath, which have all sprung from the false and erroneous opinion, that Christians must have such a mode of divine worship as is conformed to the Levitical or Jewish service, and that Christ enjoined it on the apostles and bishops to invent new ceremonies which should be necessary to salvation. The same errors have intertwined themselves with the Christian church, when the doctrine concerning the righteousness of faith was not taught and preached in its purity. Some argue that Sunday ought to be kept, although not on the ground of divine obligation, and prescribe what kind and how much labor may be performed on holy-days. But what else are such disputations than snares of conscience? For although they undertake to mitigate human traditions and give them a modified explanation, yet no mitigation (*mitigatio*) can be adopted as long as the belief of their necessity is entertained. And this belief must continue as long as the doctrine concerning the righteousness of faith and of Christian liberty is unknown. The apostles have commanded that men should abstain from blood and from things strangled. But who at present observes their injunction? And yet those are not guilty of sin who do not observe it, for the apostles themselves did not wish to burden the consciences of men with such servitude, but prohibited those things for a season, to avoid giving offence. For in explaining his ordinance, we must

have regard to the cardinal article of Christian doctrine which is not abrogated by it.

Scarcely any of the old canons are observed according to their literal import, and many of these traditions are daily neglected, even by those who are most diligent in such observances. Nor can any relief be afforded to the conscience of men unless we adopt this principle of mitigation, namely, that we must understand how to observe those traditions in such a manner as not to regard them as necessary, or to suppose that conscience is violated even if their observance is neglected. And the bishops would readily be obeyed if they did not insist upon exacting obedience to those traditions which cannot be observed without sin. At present they prohibit the holy Sacrament in both kinds, and the marriage of the clergy, and will receive no one until he has taken an oath not to preach these doctrines, which are nevertheless undoubtedly accordant with the gospel.

Our churches do not desire that the bishops should make peace and restore harmony to the detriment of their honor and dignity; although, in a case of necessity, it would be proper for them even to do this. They merely request that bishops should remove certain unjust burdens, which formerly did not exist in the church, which were adopted contrary to the usage of the universal church, and which, although at first there may have been some reason for their adoption, are not suited to our times. Nor can it be denied that several traditions were adopted through ignorance. The bishops ought therefore to have the goodness to mitigate these ordinances to preserve the unity of the church; since such a change would do no injury, and many ordinances appointed by men were of their own accord abandoned, in the course of time, as unnecessary, as the Papal code itself shows. But if they cannot grant our request, and mitigate or abolish such human ordinances which cannot be observed without sin, we are bound to follow the direction of the apostles, which *commands us to 'obey God rather than men.'*

St. Peter forbids the bishops to exercise lordship, as though they possessed the power to compel the church to do as they pleased. But the object at which we aim is not to take from the bishops their power, but we desire and entreat them not to coerce the conscience to sin. But if they fail to do this, and despise this petition, then let them remember that they must answer to God for having, by their severity, caused

division and schism in the church, which it was certainly their duty to prevent.

CONCLUSION.

The foregoing are the principal subjects of dispute between us. It were indeed easy to enumerate many other abuses and errors, but for the sake of brevity we have omitted them. Much complaint, for example, has existed concerning indulgences, pilgrimages, and the abuse of excommunication. The clergy have also had endless disputes with the monks about confession, burials, funeral discourses, and numberless other subjects. All these we have omitted for the sake of moderation, in order that the most important points in this matter may the more easily be understood. Nor should it be supposed that anything has been spoken or adduced out of hatred or severity toward any one; but we have enumerated only those points which we regarded it necessary to adduce and mention, in order that it might the more easily be seen that we have adopted nothing, either in regard to doctrine or ceremonies, that is opposed to the Holy Scriptures or to the universal Christian church. For, not to indulge in boastings, it is notorious and publicly known, that we have labored with all diligence to prevent any new or impious doctrine from insinuating itself into our churches; or from spreading and prevailing in them.

The above-enumerated articles we have desired to present, in accordance with the (imperial) Citation, as an exhibition of our Confession and of our doctrine. If any one should find defects in it, we hold ourselves ready to furnish him with additional information, on the ground of the divine and Holy Scriptures.

Signed,

JOHN, the Elector of Saxony,
 GEORGE, Earl of Brandenburg,
 ERNEST, Duke of Luneberg,
 PHILIP, Landgrave of Hesse,
 JOHN FREDERICK, Duke of Saxony,
 FRANCIS, Duke of Luneberg,
 WOLFGANG, Prince of Anhalt,
 THE SENATE AND MAGISTRACY of Nuremberg,
 THE SENATE of Reutlingen.

The following preamble and resolutions in reference to alleged errors in the Augsburg Confession were presented and adopted :

Whereas The General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States has recognized the Augsburg Confession, both in the Constitution of the Theological Seminary and in the Constitution recommended to District Synods, as well as in her Liturgy : And

Whereas Our churches have been agitated by the imputation of grave and dangerous errors in this Confession, so that amid conflicting statements many who are sincerely desirous of knowing the truth are distracted, knowing not what to believe, whereby the danger of internal conflict and schism is greatly increased : And

Whereas the General Synod, according to its Constitution, "shall apply all their powers, their prayers and their means, towards the prevention of schism among us," we, therefore, in Synod assembled, in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, desire to declare to our churches and before the world our judgment in regard to the imputation of these errors and the alienation among brethren which may arise from them : Therefore,

Resolved, That while this Synod, resting on the word of God as the sole authority in matters of faith on its infallible warrant, rejects the Romish doctrine of the real presence or Transubstantiation, and with it the doctrine of Consubstantiation ; rejects the Romish mass, and all the ceremonies distinctive of the mass ; denies any power in the sacraments, as an *opus operatum*, or that the blessings of Baptism and the Lord's Supper can be received without faith ; rejects auricular confession and priestly absolution ; holds that there is no priesthood on earth, but that of all believers, and that God only can forgive sins ; and maintains the divine obligation of the Sabbath. And while we would, with our whole heart, reject any part of any Confession which taught doctrines in conflict with this, our testimony ; Nevertheless, before God and his Church, we declare, that in our judgment the Augsburg Confession, properly interpreted, is in perfect consistence with this our testimony and with the Holy Scriptures as regards the errors specified. — *Minutes of the General Synod, York, Pa., May, 1864.*

FORMULA

FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND DISCIPLINE

OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE GENERAL SYNOD
IN THE UNITED STATES.
(REVISED IN 1888.)

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY PRINCIPLES.

SECTION 1. We believe that from an examination of the works of nature and the course of events, we may derive evidence of the existence of God and the prominent truths of natural religion.*

SEC. 2. But that the evidence of natural religion is not such as to afford us a satisfactory knowledge of the nature of God and our relation to him; nor its influence sufficient to urge us to duty; † and that, therefore, a farther revelation from God is necessary.

SEC. 3. We believe that such a revelation God has given, at sundry times and in divers manners, unto the fathers, and in later days by his *Divine Son* Jesus Christ, and his inspired servants; ‡ that this revelation is contained in the books known in Protestant Christendom as the Old § and New Testaments, and that every individual is bound to receive this as his infallible rule of faith and practice, and to be governed by it. ||

SEC. 4. We hold that liberty of conscience and the free exercise of private judgment in matters of religion, are natural and inalienable rights of men, of which no government, civil or ecclesiastical, can deprive us. ¶

SEC. 5. As order is necessary to the prosperity of every

* Rom. i. 20.

† Acts iv. 12; Rom. iii. 1, 2.

‡ Heb.-i. 1, 2.

§ 2 Tim. iii. 16.

|| John v. 39; Acts xv. 11; John xiv. 16, 17.

¶ Rom. ii. 13, 15, and others; Dan. vi. 1, 23; Acts iv. 19.

associate body, and as Jesus Christ has left no entire, specific form of Government and Discipline for His church, it is the duty of every individual church to adopt such regulations as appear to them most consistent with the spirit and precepts of the New Testament, and best calculated to subserve the interests of the Church of Christ.

SEC. 6. And as men exercising the right of private judgment agree in the opinion that Christianity requires a social connection among its professors; and as experience proves that men will differ in some of their views of doctrine and discipline; and as too much difference of opinion would be prejudicial to the objects of such an association, therefore reason dictates that those holding similar views of faith and practice should associate together; that it is their duty to require for admission to church-membership among them, or for induction into the sacred office, and for continuance in either, such terms as they deem most accordant with the precepts and spirit of the Bible.

SEC. 7. Upon the broad basis of these principles was the Evangelical Lutheran Church founded, immediately after the Reformation. Adhering to the same principles, the Church in America is governed by *three Judicatories*: the *Council* of each individual church; the *District Synods*, consisting of the clergy and lay delegates from a particular district of country, and one *GENERAL SYNOD*, formed by representatives from all the different Synods of the Lutheran Church receiving, and holding the word of God as contained in the canonical Scriptures of the old and new Testaments as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the Augsburg Confession as a correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the divine word, and of the faith of our Church founded upon that word.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE CHURCH.

PART I.—OF THE INVISIBLE CHURCH.

SECTION 1. The true or invisible Church of Christ is the collective body of all * those of every religious denomination in the world, who are in a state of grace.†

* Eph. iv. 1, 7.

† Matt. vii. 21, xii. 50; Acts x. 35.

SEC. 2. The true Church of Christ is a spiritual * society, consisting of members whose qualifications † are spiritual, and who are associated for spiritual purposes. ‡

SEC. 3. It is a catholic or universal § society; its members not being confined to any particular nation or religious denomination.

PART II.—OF THE EXTERNAL OR VISIBLE CHURCH.

SECTION 1. The visible church is the collective body of those who profess the Christian religion; consisting of all those who have been admitted to membership by baptism, || and have not been deprived of it by excommunication.

SEC. 2. Of this church our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the true and only head; ¶ having neither abandoned his church nor appointed any vicar in his stead.

SEC. 3. As the spirit of Christianity leads its possessors to social intercourse ** with each other, and as such a fellowship is essential to the accomplishment of the object of the Christian church; therefore, believers, living near together, have from the time of the apostles †† formed themselves into Christian congregations.

SEC. 4. It is the duty of every such church to have the word and sacraments administered in their purity; ‡‡ to give an adequate and just support to the pastor or pastors who minister unto them; to provide for the perpetuation of a faithful ministry able to teach, §§ and to endeavor to propagate the gospel to the ends of the earth. |||

SEC. 5. It is the duty of the church to watch over the purity and faithfulness of her members. ¶¶

SEC. 6. The jurisdiction of the church is purely spiritual; it ought to have no connection with the civil government, *** neither ought its decisions be enforced by the arm of civil power.

* John xviii. 36.

† John iv. 13.

‡ Eph. iv. 12; 1 Thess. v. 11.

§ 1 Cor. i. 2; John x. 16; Rom. xii. 4; Eph. iv. 4, 6.

|| Matt. xxviii. 19.

¶ Eph. v. 23, 24; Eph. i. 22.

** John xiii. 34, 35; Eph. iv. 3; v. 19.

†† Acts ii. 41; 1 Thess. ii. 14; Gal. i. 22.

‡‡ 1 Tim. iv. 6; vi. 3, 5; Gal. i. 8, 9.

§§ Tit. i. 5; 2 Tim. ii. 2.

||| Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.

¶¶ 1 Cor. v. 7, 13.

*** John xviii. 26.

SEC. 7. The power of the church is purely *declarative*, whether exercised by an individual church council, or by any other ecclesiastical judicatory; i. e. the *Bible* is their juridical code, and their decisions are valid, only because founded on Scripture.

SEC. 8. The visible church is not an association to which we may belong or not at our option, but it is the duty of every one who has an opportunity, to be a faithful member of it.*

CHAPTER III.

OF THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH.

OF PASTORS.

SECTION 1. Our Lord and Saviour himself instituted the clerical office in the New Testament church, and made it of perpetual standing.† The persons filling this office, are in Scripture designated by different names, as bishop, presbyter or elder, etc.,‡ indicative of the duties of the office. All these are by divine right of equal rank,§ and their duties are principally these: *to expound the word of God, to conduct the public worship of God,|| to administer the sacraments, to participate in the government of the church,¶ and to admonish men of their duties,*** as well as by all proper means, public and private, to edify the church of Christ.

SEC. 2. Those other officers who were endowed with miraculous gifts, and whose instrumentality Christ used in first forming the church, were extraordinary and of temporary standing.

SEC. 3. Pastors are amenable for their conduct to the Synod to which they belong; and that Synod is the tribunal which has the entire jurisdiction over them: excepting in

* Matt. xxviii. 19; xi. 28, 29.

† Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; 2 Tim. ii. 2; Tit. i. 5.

‡ 2 Cor. iv. 1; Eph. iv. 11.

§ Luke xxii. 25, 26; Acts xx. 17, compared with 28.

|| Eph. iv. 11, 12; Acts viii. 28, 31; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2.

¶ Matt. xxviii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 23, iv. 1.

** Acts vi. 2, 6.

those cases where a regular appeal is obtained to the General Synod, agreeably to Article IV., Section 8, of the Constitution of the General Synod.

SEC. 4. No minister shall knowingly grant to a member of another congregation any privileges of the church, which would be denied to said member by his own pastor.

SEC. 5. It is the sacred duty of every minister so to conduct himself, that his life shall present to his congregation an example of true Christian propriety of deportment: And should any minister of our church be guilty of an open vice, (which may God in mercy prevent!) it shall be the duty of the Church Council earnestly to exhort him several times to reformation; and if this should prove ineffectual, or if the case be such as to bring disgrace upon the church, to report him to the President of the Synod.

OF ELDERS AND DEACONS.

SECTION 6. The other officers of the church are Elders and Deacons, who are elected by the members of the church as their agents to perform some of the duties originally devolving on themselves. The principal duties of Elders, are to aid the pastor or pastors in administering the government and discipline of the church; to endeavor to preserve peace and harmony among its members; to visit the Sabbath and other congregational schools, and promote the religious education of the children of the church; to visit the sick and afflicted, and aid in the performance of such other duties as are incumbent on the Church Council.

The duties of the Deacons' office are principally these: To lead an exemplary life, as commanded in the Scriptures; * to minister unto the poor,† extending to their wants and distributing faithfully amongst them the collections which may be made for their use; to assist the pastor in the administration of the Eucharist; to attend and render all necessary service at stated worship; to see that their minister receives a just and adequate support, according to the commands of our Lord; to administer the temporal concerns of the church, and to aid in the performance of such other duties as are incumbent on the Church Council. Both these officers are elected by the members of the church, and it is

* 1 Tim. viii. 13, and others.

† Acts vi. 2, 6.

their duty to feel the deepest interest in the advancement of piety among them, and to exert their utmost influence to promote it.

SEC. 7. The Elders and Deacons are the representatives of the whole church, and each church shall determine the number of their officers and the term of their duration in office; yet in no case shall they serve less than two years nor more than eight, unless re-elected. And when elected they shall be inducted into their respective offices, according to the form prescribed by the Church.*

SEC. 8. When the corporate powers of the church are vested in the Church Council, trustees are unnecessary. Those congregations, however, which have been in the habit of having Trustees, may, if they deem it expedient, still retain them, and continue to them such privileges as they may deem expedient.

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL.

SECTION 1. The Church Council is the lowest judicatory of the church, consisting of the pastor, or pastors, and all the elders and deacons of a particular church.

SEC. 2. The pastor, together with half the other existing members of the Council, and, in the necessary absence of the pastor, two-thirds of the remaining members of the Council, shall constitute a quorum.

SEC. 3. But no business connected with the government or discipline of the church shall be transacted without the presence of the minister, unless his absence is unavoidable or voluntary, or the church be vacant. And when present, the pastor shall be *ex-officio* chairman.

SEC. 4. The Church Council† shall have the superintendence of all the temporal concerns of the church, and shall see that they are administered with wisdom, faithfulness and justice. They shall also elect from the members of the Council or the congregation a deputy to represent them at the annual synodical meeting.

SEC. 5. It shall be the duty of the Council to admit to

* Vide "Liturgy," etc.

† Thess. v. 12, 13.

membership adults, who shall make application, and whom, on mature examination, they shall judge to be possessed of the qualifications hereafter specified.* They shall be obedient subjects of divine grace—that is, they must satisfy the Church Council that they have sincerely repented of their sins, and truly believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Also, to admit to the communion of the church all those who were admitted to church-membership in their infancy, and whom on like examination, they shall judge possessed of the above-mentioned qualifications. No one shall be considered a fit subject for confirmation who has not previously attended a course of religious lectures delivered by the pastor, on the most important doctrines and principles of religion, unless the pastor should be satisfied that the applicant's attainments are adequate without this attendance. And when adults are admitted to membership, their baptism shall, if possible, be performed publicly before the church; and when members who were baptized in their infancy are admitted to full communion, they shall in the same public manner *confirm* their baptismal vows according to the form of confirmation customary in the church.

SEC. 6. It shall be the duty of the pastor, or the Church Council, to keep a complete list of all the communing members, the record of which shall be the property of the church.

SEC. 7. If any member of the Church Council shall conduct himself in a manner unworthy of his office, he may be accused before the Council, and if found guilty, his case shall be referred to the whole church for decision.

SEC. 8. It shall be the duty of the Council to administer the discipline of the church on all those whose conduct is inconsistent with their Christian profession, or who entertain fundamental errors.† To this end they shall have power to cite any of their church-members to appear before them, and to endeavor to obtain other witnesses, when the case may require it. It shall further be the duty of the Council, when any member offends, first privately to admonish him, or, if necessary, to call him to an account; and if these measures prove ineffectual, to suspend or excommunicate him, that is, to debar him from the privileges peculiar

* Mark xvi. 16; John iii. 5; Acts viii. 15; xvi. 14, 15.

† 1 Cor. v. 7, 13.

to church-membership, according to the precepts of the New Testament laid down in this formula. It shall also be their duty to restore* those subjects of suspension or excommunication, to all the privileges of the church, who shall manifest sincere repentance. Every act of excommunication or of restoration may be published to the church, if deemed necessary by the majority of the Council.

SEC. 9. The Church Council may at any time be convened by the minister; and it shall be his duty to call a meeting when requested by two members of the Council, or by one-fourth of the electors of the church, or when directed by the Synod.

SEC. 10. It shall be the duty of the Church Council to watch over the religious education of the children of the church, and to see that they be occasionally collected, for the purpose of being taught the Catechism of the church, and instructed in the duties and principles of the Christian religion.

SEC. 11. The Church Council shall keep a record of their proceedings, of all the baptisms, and of persons admitted to sacramental communion; an abstract of which shall be annually sent to the Synod for inspection.

SEC. 12. In all cases of appeal from the decisions of the Church Council, the Council shall take no further measures grounded on their decision until the sentence has been reviewed by the Synod. But if the decision appealed from be a sentence of suspension or excommunication, it shall immediately take effect and continue in force until reversed by the Synod. And in every case of appeal, the Church Council shall send a detailed and correct account of their proceedings in the case, and of the charges and evidence on both sides.

SEC. 13. Any vacant pastoral district may also send a delegate to the Synod as their representative.

CHAPTER V.

OF CHURCH-MEMBERS.

SECTION 1. The members of any particular church are all those members of the *visible* (see Chap. 2, Sec. 1) church,

* 2 Cor. ii. 7; Gal. vi. 1.

who are associated together under some form of Christian government and discipline, for divine worship, and the better attainment of the objects for which the Church of Christ was instituted.

SEC. 2. Every church-member is amenable to the Council, and must appear before them when cited, and submit to the discipline of the church regularly administered.*

SEC. 3. It is the duty of every church-member to lead a Christian life; that is, to perform all the duties required of him or her in Scripture. Thus it is the duty of adults to perform all the Christian duties; to attend the public worship of God,† and to partake of the Lord's supper‡ whenever an opportunity is afforded. It is the duty of parents to educate their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,§ to teach them the doctrines of the church, and to subject them to the ordinances of the same. ||

SEC. 4. Any member being dissatisfied with the decision of the Church Council relative to himself, may appeal to the Synod. But, in every case the applicant shall give notice to the Church Council of his intention, either immediately or within two weeks of the time when the sentence was made known to him, and shall specify to them the reasons of his dissatisfaction and the ground of his appeal.

SEC. 5. It is recommended that when a member of one of our churches moves into the bounds of another, and wishes to be admitted to the privileges of the church, he shall bring with him a certificate of good standing from his former pastor; and, until he hand in his certificate, he remains responsible to the church from which he came.

SEC. 6. It is recommended, as accordant with the principles of the New Testament, that the members of the church ought not to prosecute each other before a civil tribunal, until they have first made an attempt to settle their point of difference through the mediation of their Christian brethren.

* Tit. iii. 10; Matt. xviii. 17, 18.

† Heb. x. 15; Col. iii. 16; Acts ii. 46; Matt. xviii. 20; Exod. xx. 8; Ps. lxxxiv. 2, 9, 11.

‡ 1 Cor. xi. 25. § Eph. vi. 4. || Eph. vi. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 14 15

CHAPTER VI.

OF ELECTIONS.

SECTION 1. All congregational elections must be published by the Church Council to the congregation, at least two weeks before the election.

SEC. 2. The Council may publish a congregational meeting for any lawful purpose when they shall deem it necessary; and they shall be compelled so to do, when requested by one-third of the lawful electors of the church.

SEC. 3. The electors of any particular church in our connection, are all those who are in full communion with the same; who submit to its government and discipline regularly administered; who contribute according to their ability and engagements to all its necessary expenditures, and who have communed, unless providentially prevented, within one year preceding an election.

SEC. 4. At all elections for *elders or deacons*, no person may be elected to either of said offices, who is not a member in full communion with said church.

SEC. 5. When an election is held in a vacant congregation for a pastor, two-thirds of all the electors present shall be necessary to an election; and if the votes were not unanimous, it is recommended that the presiding officer shall invite the minority to concur in the decision. He shall give the minister a certificate, signed by himself, of his election. This certificate, with a statement of the support* which they promise him, shall be a legal call to the pastor therein specified.

SEC. 6. At elections for members of the Church Council, the existing Council shall nominate twice as many persons as are to be elected, and the church may nominate half as many more, if they deem it necessary, from whom the officers may be chosen.

SEC. 7. If, from any cause, a vacancy occurs in the Council in the interval between the stated elections, it shall be filled without delay by a special election, and the person thus elected shall serve until the regular expiration of the time of the member in whose place he was elected.

* 1 Tim. v. 8; 1 Cor ix. 14; Luke x. 7.

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CHAPTER VII.

OF PRAYER MEETINGS, ETC.

SECTION 1. As prayer is one of the most necessary duties of a Christian,* and as prayer meetings have been of the utmost importance and usefulness, it is, therefore, most earnestly recommended to the different churches in our connection, to establish and promote them among our members. These meetings may be held in the church, school-house, or in private houses, and their object is the spiritual edification of the persons present; but the utmost precaution must ever be observed that God, who is a spirit, be worshipped in spirit and in truth; that they be characterized by that solemnity and decorum which ought ever to attend divine worship, and that no disorder be tolerated, or anything that is calculated to interrupt the devotions of those who are convened, or prevent their giving the fullest attention to him who is engaged in leading the meeting; in short, that, according to the injunction of the apostle, all things be done "decently and in order."

SEC. 2. It is solemnly recommended to all church-members, and more especially to the members of the Council, to make daily worship in their families a sacred duty.†

SEC. 3. It is expedient that no person be permitted to preach in any of the churches in our connection, except by consent of the pastor and Council of said church, and, in the absence of the pastor, by permission of the Council.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF SYNODS.

SECTION 1. It was found necessary and profitable in the primitive church, to have an occasional meeting of different individual churches, for the purpose of consultation and mutual encouragement, in preserving their purity and promoting their welfare.‡ This apostolical custom is retained

* 1 Thess. v. 17; Luke xviii. 1; Col. iv. 2.

† Acts i. 44; Eph. vi. 3; Acts x. 12; Jer. x. 25.

‡ Acts xv. 2, 6, 22, 23; Acts xxi. 15, 17, 18.

in the Lutheran Church, under the name of Conference, Synod, and General Synod.

SEC. 2. A Synod consists of all ministers and licensed candidates within a certain district, and one lay delegate from each pastoral charge located within such district.

SEC. 3. It shall be the duty of each Synod, to see that the rules of government and discipline prescribed in this Formula, are observed by all the congregations and ministers within their bounds, to receive appeals from decisions of church councils, and of Special Conferences, when regularly brought before them, and review and reverse or confirm the decisions to which they refer; to examine and decide on all charges against ministers and licentiates, that of heterodoxy alone excepted; to form and change ministerial districts; to attend to any business relating to their churches, which is regularly brought before them; to provide supplies for destitute congregations, and to devise and execute all suitable measures for the promotion of piety and the general prosperity of the church, not otherwise disposed of in this Formula.

SEC. 4. To this end the Synod and Ministerium shall have power to cite any church-members within their bounds to appear before them; and to endeavor to obtain other witnesses, when the case may require it.

SEC. 5. If any congregation, hitherto in connection with a Synod, should refuse to observe the resolutions of said Synod, or the provisions of this Formula, it shall be excluded from connection with said Synod during the time of its refusal; nor shall any other Synod, nor any Lutheran minister or licentiate, take charge of it without special permission of the President.

SEC. 6. Any congregation may become connected with the Synod within whose bounds it is situated, by acceding to the provisions of this Formula, and making some annual contribution towards defraying the necessary expenses of said Synod. For this purpose an annual collection ought to be held in each congregation.

SEC. 7. At least one meeting of each Synod shall be held every year, at such time and place as may have been determined on.

SEC. 8. No minister or licentiate shall be absent from the meeting of the Synod without the most urgent necessity. In case of his absence, he shall, if possible, send to the Synod a

written apology for his absence. Voluntary ministerial engagements shall not be regarded as a sufficient excuse. Any minister or licentiate violating the provisions of this section, shall be called to account by the President at the next meeting.

SEC. 9. These written apologies, as well as all other letters and papers intended for the Synod or Ministerium, ought to be addressed to the President.

SEC. 10. The minister of the place in which the Synod is held, with the church council, shall endeavor to provide for the entertainment of the ministers, candidates, and lay delegates, by Christian friends.

SEC. 11. All the members of the Synod shall endeavor to assemble on the evening preceding the day appointed.

SEC. 12. Divine worship shall be celebrated, during the meeting of the Synod, as often as may be convenient, and consistent with the business of the Synod.

SEC. 13. Ministers in good standing in other Synods, or in any sister churches, who may happen to be present, or who appear as delegates from said bodies, may be received as advisory members, but cannot vote in any decisions of the Synod.

CHAPTER IX.

OFFICERS OF THE SYNOD.

SECTION 1. The officers of Synod shall be a President, Secretary or Secretaries, and Treasurer, who shall be elected by a majority of votes present, either annually, or at such stated times as may be determined by each Synod. The President and Secretaries shall be ordained ministers, the Treasurer may be either a minister or a layman.

PRESIDENT.

SECTION 2. He shall deliver a discourse at the opening of each annual meeting of Synod, or appoint a substitute; and shall, in connection with the pastor of the church, have direction of the religious exercises during Synod, and the appointment of individuals to preach; unless Synod shall

appoint a special committee on religious exercises, and of which he and the pastor shall be members.

SEC. 3. He shall preside at all meetings of the Synod, decide questions of order, subject to an appeal to Synod, and discharge all the duties usually devolving on the presiding officer of such a body.

SEC. 4. He shall appoint all committees not specially named or elected by Synod.

SEC. 5. He shall, after the Synod is duly constituted by enrolling the names of the members, present a written report of all his official acts during the Synodical year, and may present such additional statements and recommendations as in his judgment should claim the attention of Synod. This report shall be dealt with as other papers belonging to Synod.

SEC. 6. He shall give advice to members of Synod and congregations when requested, or when in his judgment such advice is needed.

SEC. 7. Should he remove from the bounds of the Synod, depart this life, resign, or become disqualified for the discharge of his duties, the Secretary shall succeed him, and discharge the duties of the office until the next meeting of Synod.

SEC. 8. He shall, with the Secretary, subscribe all official documents of the Synod.

SEC. 9. He shall perform the ceremony of ordination, assisted by the Secretary and the ministers, and give to approved candidates letters of license, which, as well as certificates of ordination, he is to subscribe with his official signature.

SECRETARY.

SEC. 10. He shall keep a faithful and accurate record of all the proceedings of Synod, carefully preserve all the papers, the seal, etc., of the Synod, subject to its direction, and shall do all the official writing not otherwise provided for.

SEC. 11. He shall give notice (either by circular or in the church papers) of the time and place of the Synodical meeting, at least four weeks previous to the time appointed.

SEC. 12. He shall keep a register of the names of all the ministers and licentiates, arranged according to their age in office, and also of the congregations, whether vacant or not, connected with the Synod.

SEC. 13. If the business should render it necessary, the President may appoint an Assistant Secretary, whose office shall expire at the close of the meeting of Synod.

SEC. 14. Should he remove from the bounds of the Synod, depart this life, or become disqualified for the discharge of his duties, the President shall require the archives, seal, and any other property of Synod, to be delivered to him, and shall appoint a Secretary to act until the meeting of Synod.

TREASURER.

SEC. 15. He shall take charge of the moneys belonging to Synod, and shall keep them subject to its order.

SEC. 16. He shall keep, and present at each annual meeting of Synod, a detailed and faithful account of the state of the Treasury. If the Synod desires it, he shall give a bond for the faithful performance of the duties of his office.

SEC. 17. Should he remove out of the bounds of the Synod, depart this life, resign, or become disqualified for the discharge of his duties, the President shall take charge of all the moneys, certificates, bonds, etc., belonging to Synod, and retain them until a Treasurer is elected at the next meeting of Synod.

CHAPTER X.

OTHER MEMBERS OF A SYNOD.

SECTION 1. No minister or licentiate shall interfere with the congregation of another, by preaching or performing other ministerial duties in them, except by the request or consent of the latter, or, in his absence, without invitation from the Church Council.

SEC. 2. Any minister or licentiate, in good standing, who removes into the bounds of another Synod, shall, on application to the President, receive a certificate of honorable dismission, and such a certificate shall be required by the Synod of those applying for admission into it.

SEC. 3. Any Lutheran minister, presenting to the President of Synod an honorable dismission from another Evangelical Lutheran Synod, shall by him be received, and his name enrolled among the members of Synod. But if objection be made to his reception, at the opening of Synod, the case shall go over until after the Synod is organized.

SEC. 4. Any minister resigning his charge shall give due notice thereof to the President, and a like notice shall be given by any minister taking charge of congregations belonging to Synods.

SEC. 5. A licentiate shall have power to perform all ministerial acts during the time specified in his license.

SEC. 6. Licentiates shall have the same rights and privileges in Synod as ordained ministers, except to hold office.

SEC. 7. A licentiate shall have liberty to visit vacant congregations and to take charge of them, either on their invitation or by direction of the President of Synod.

SEC. 8. A licentiate, after he has taken a charge, shall not leave it, without the sanction of the Synod, or of the President.

SEC. 9. No church in this Synod shall enact anything in the form of Constitution and By-laws in conflict with the Constitution of Synod or Formula of Government.

LAY DELEGATES.

SEC. 10. Each lay delegate, entitled to a seat by this Constitution, shall have equal rights with the ministers in all business belonging to the Synod; that is, may take part in the debates, offer resolutions, and vote on all synodical questions.

CHAPTER XI.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

1. The President shall open the first session of Synod with appropriate religious services, and every session thereafter shall be opened and closed with prayer. In the absence of the President, the Secretary shall conduct the opening exercises, and in the absence of both, the oldest acting minister present.

2. Calling of the roll of ministers and licentiates by the Secretary, and noting the absentees.

3. Reception of lay delegates, who shall exhibit their certificates of appointment and be registered.

4. Applications for membership from other Lutheran Synods received. If objection be made to an applicant, the case shall be deferred until after Synod is fully organized.

5. Reading the President's annual report.

6. Election of officers for the ensuing year.

7. Delegates from other Synods, or members from other bodies, received.

8. Minutes of the last Synod read or referred to a committee.

9. All papers intended for the Synod may be handed in, and verbal notice given of any important business intended to be brought before Synod.

10. The papers may be taken up and discussed, or referred to appropriate committees, who can report at any time when ready. Reports of special and standing committees shall have preference.

11. Presentation of Parochial Reports according to the rules of Synod.

12. Treasurer's report.

13. Education and Missionary business. This may be attended to by Synod as a whole, or committees may be charged with it, who shall report to Synod.

14. Vacant congregations inquired into, and provision made for them.

15. Promiscuous business.

16. Election of delegates to General Synod, and of trustees or directors in any Institution in which Synod is represented. All elections shall be by ballot.

17. Appointment of delegates to other Synods, or other ecclesiastical bodies.

18. Choice of time and place of meeting.

19. Adjournment of Synod to time and place of next meeting. Synod shall be closed with appropriate religious exercises.

CHAPTER XII.

PROCESS AGAINST A MINISTER.

SECTION 1. As the honor and success of the Gospel depend very much on the character of its ministers, Synod ought to guard with the utmost care and impartiality the conduct of its members.

SEC. 2. All Christians should be very cautious in giving credit or circulation to an evil report of any member of the Church, and especially of a minister of the Gospel. If any member knows a minister to be guilty of a private censurable fault, he should warn him in private; if this prove fruitless, he should apply to the Church Council, who shall

proceed as specified in Chapter III., Sec. 5, of Formula of Government.

SEC. 3. If accusation be lodged, according to Chapter III., Sec. 5, with the President within two months of the next Synodical meeting, he shall defer the matter to said meeting; yet if the charge be one of gross immorality, or circulating fundamental error in doctrine, he shall immediately direct the accused to suspend all his ministerial duties until his case is decided. If such accusation be lodged with the President at an earlier date, he shall, if the charge be one of gross immorality, or circulating fundamental error in doctrine, immediately appoint a committee of five ordained ministers of the Synod, to meet without unnecessary delay at a suitable place, and institute a formal investigation of the case, according to the principles of this Formula. The chairman of the committee shall give at least ten days' notice, to all parties concerned, of the time and place of meeting.

SEC. 4. If the Synod is divided into Conference districts, the President may, at his discretion, intrust the matter to Conference, and notify the members to meet and proceed as above.

SEC. 5. Any three members of the committee, or a majority of the Conference thus meeting, shall have power to proceed and hold a fair and impartial investigation of the case, and to take all such necessary measures as may be just and proper to determine the guilt or innocence of the accused.

SEC. 6. If the accused confess, and the matter be such as gross immorality, or circulating fundamental error, he shall be immediately suspended from the exercise of the office until the meeting of Synod.

SEC. 7. If a minister accused of gross offences, being duly notified, refuse to attend the investigation, he shall be immediately suspended from office.

SEC. 8. If the accused deny the charge, and yet, on examination of the evidence, be found guilty, the committee or Conference shall nevertheless proceed to pass sentence on him.

SEC. 9. The highest punishment which can be inflicted by a committee or special Conference, appointed as above specified, is suspension from clerical functions; and this sentence is to be reported at the next meeting of the Synod, and remain in force until reversed by the Synod.

SEC. 10. Any minister intending to appeal from the decision of a committee or Conference, shall give notice of it to the chairman of the committee or Conference, within three weeks of the time when the decision was made, that both parties may be prepared for a new trial.

SEC. 11. Conferences, not specially convened for the purpose, may attend to any charges of importance against a minister within their bounds, if all the parties concerned are prepared and willing to proceed.

SEC. 12. If at any time the accusation be lodged with the President, according to Chap. III., Sec. 5, for a less offence than those specified in Sec. 3 of this Article, he shall take no other steps in the case than to write to the accused and accusers, exhorting them to mutual forbearance, and referring them to the next Synod.

SEC. 13. If accusation against a minister be made immediately to the Synod, and the Synod believe itself in possession of all the evidence necessary to a just decision, the case may be immediately examined and sentence passed, provided the accused shall have had fifteen days' notice, together with a written specification of the charges brought against him; and this whether he shall be present at Synod or not. But if the necessary evidence be not before Synod, and the offence be such as specified in Sec. 3, then it shall be intrusted to a committee or Conference, to proceed as above specified.

SEC. 14. If a minister be found guilty of gross immorality or circulating fundamental error in doctrine, his sentence of suspension shall not be removed until he shall give satisfactory evidence of penitence and reformation, and his restoration shall be by the same judicatory which suspended him, or at its recommendation.

SEC. 15. If the common report of a minister's guilt of any of the charges above specified, be such as seriously to injure the cause of religion, and his own church do not proceed against him, it shall be the duty of any other minister or layman, having obtained two other signatures of credible men, to report the case to the President.

CHAPTER XIII.

VACANT CONGREGATIONS.

SECTION 1. Vacant congregations which cannot be immediately supplied with a minister, are advised to assemble

on the Lord's day, to elect some member of the church, of suitable capacities and character, to conduct the exercises, and engage in the worship of God, as recommended in Chap. VII., Sec. 1.

SEC. 2. It is also recommended, that at these meetings a portion of the Scriptures, of the prayers contained in the Liturgy, and of some selected sermon, such as are approved by the President of the Synod, be read.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONFERENCES.

SECTION 1. The Synod may divide itself into Conference Districts for the purpose of holding Conference meetings.

SEC. 2. The chief object of such meetings shall be the preaching of the Word, mutual consultation and encouragement in the work of the Lord, and seeking in every proper way to advance the interest of religion among the churches.

SEC. 3. Conferences may attend to any business referred to them by Synod or by Congregations, which does not specially belong to Synod itself.

SEC. 4. The records of the proceedings of Conferences shall be submitted to Synod for examination and review.

CHAPTER XV.

MINISTERIUM.

SECTION 1. The Ministerium is composed of the ordained ministers of Synod, and shall have charge of the examination of candidates, licensure and ordination of ministers, reception of ministers from other ecclesiastical bodies, and the examination and decision of charges of heresy against any of its own members.

SEC. 2. The officers of Synod shall be officers of the Ministerium, and shall attend to the duties of such officers.

SEC. 3. A meeting of the Ministerium may be called at any time during the Convention of Synod, by the President, and he shall call one when requested by three members.

SEC. 4. A special meeting of the Ministerium may be

called by the President when requested in writing by one-third of the ordained ministers of Synod, stating the object of the meeting. Of such meeting notice must be given, by circular or letter, fifteen days previous.

SEC. 5. The examination of candidates for licensure may be conducted before the whole Ministerium, or in private by a committee appointed for that purpose, as the Ministerium may decide.

SEC. 6. The examination shall embrace, at least, the following subjects, viz: Personal piety and motives for seeking the office of the ministry, the original languages [Hebrew and Greek] of the inspired Scriptures, Theology, Church History, Pastoral Theology, Homiletics and Church Government.

SEC. 7. In all cases of licensure or ordination, a vote of two-thirds of the members present shall be necessary; and the same shall be required for the reception of a minister applying for admission from another denomination, after having undergone such examination as may be deemed necessary by the Ministerium, or in such Synod where the Ministerium does not exist, by the Synod.

SEC. 8. The ceremony of Licensure and Ordination shall be performed according to the forms prescribed in the Liturgy of the General Synod, and the ordination may be either at the time of the meeting of the assembled Ministerium, or in the church to which the individual is called, by a committee appointed by the Ministerium for the purpose.

SEC. 9. All licenses shall extend to the time of the next annual meeting of the Ministerium, and shall be renewed, as a matter of course, unless satisfactory reasons are known to the Ministerium, which render a renewal inexpedient. And if for any reason no meeting be held at the appointed time, the licenses granted by said Ministerium shall remain in force until revoked.

SEC. 10. Licentiates shall keep a journal of their ministerial acts, which, with a few sermons of their own composition, shall be submitted to the Ministerium for inspection.

SEC. 11. The following shall be the order of business in the Ministerium:

1. Opening with prayer, or prayer with other suitable religious exercises.
2. Calling of the roll.
3. Communication by the President of any business which he may have to report.

4. Presentation of the licenses, journals, and sermons of the licentiates.

5. Application of candidates for examination, if not already examined by a committee : and also the application for the reception of ministers from other denominations.

6. Hearing of reports from the examining committee, or from committees on journals and sermons of licentiates, or from any other committee appointed by the Ministerium.

7. Promiscuous business relating to the ministry.

8. Adjournment with suitable religious exercises.

SEC. 12. All business not specifically intrusted in this Formula to the Ministerium shall belong to the Synod.

SEC. 13. In the installation of a pastor, the ceremony of installation shall take place in the church to which he is called, and shall be conducted according to the form prescribed in the Liturgy of the General Synod.

SEC. 14. In all cases where District Synods have not made provision for a Ministerium, all the powers and duties prescribed in this article shall devolve on the Synod.

CONSTITUTION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD.

ADOPTED AT WASHINGTON IN 1869.

PREAMBLE.

JESUS CHRIST, the Supreme Head of His Church, having prescribed no entire specific directory for its government and discipline, and every section of His Church being left at liberty to make such regulations additional to those found in the Scriptures, as are in harmony with the Word of God, and best adapted to its situation and circumstances ; therefore, relying upon God our Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit in the Word of God, for the promotion of the practice of brotherly love, to the furtherance of Christian concord, to the firm establishment and continuance of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and for the accomplishment of the grand design for which the Church of Christ was established on earth,— We, the Evangelical Lutheran Synods

connected with the General Synod, for ourselves and our successors, do adopt the following

CONSTITUTION.

ARTICLE I.

The name, style, and title of this body shall be, 'THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.'

ARTICLE II.

SECTION 1. The General Synod shall consist of the Clerical and Lay Delegates from the several District Synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States which are now connected with it, or may hereafter join themselves thereunto, and who shall be duly acknowledged as members thereof in the following ratio, namely:

Each Evangelical Lutheran Synod, containing eight ministers, may send one; if it contain sixteen, two; if twenty-four, three; if thirty-two, four; if forty, five; if fifty-five, six; if seventy, seven; if eighty-five, eight; and if it contain one hundred and upwards, nine delegates of the rank of ordained ministers, and an equal number of lay delegates. Each Synod at present connected with this body shall be entitled to at least one clerical and one lay representative.

SEC. 2. Each delegate appearing in the General Synod, according to this ratio shall enjoy equal rights and privileges in the transaction of its business. Each Synod may choose its delegates in such manner as to it may seem proper, and shall pay the travelling expenses of the same to and from the General Synod, unless the General Synod itself shall otherwise provide.

SEC. 3. All regularly constituted Lutheran Synods, not now in connection with the General Synod, receiving and holding with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of our fathers, the Word of God, as contained in the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the Augsburg Confession, as a correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the Divine word and of the faith of our Church founded upon that word, may at any time become associated with the

General Synod, by adopting this Constitution, and sending delegates to its convention according to the ratio specified in section first of this article.

SEC. 4. Should the delegates of any District Synod withdraw from the sessions of the General Synod without the consent of a majority of the members of the body, and such withdrawal be sanctioned by their Synod; or should any Synod, without being excused by the General Synod, decline sending delegates, such Synod shall be considered as having severed its connection with the General Synod, and its delegates can only be again received as those of a newly-applying Synod.

ARTICLE III.

SECTION 1. The delegates to the General Synod shall, at each meeting, choose by ballot, from among their own number, a President and Secretary; and, from among their own number or elsewhere, a Treasurer. These officers shall continue in office until the next meeting of the Synod, and until others are chosen in their stead. The same person is at all times re-eligible as Secretary or Treasurer; but no one may be elected President except an ordained minister, nor more than twice in succession.

SEC. 2. The President shall act as chairman of the Synod, and may take part in the discussions, and vote as any other member, but shall not originate motions. He shall subscribe all letters, written advices, resolutions, and proceedings of the Synod. In extraordinary cases, and by request of any one or more of the acknowledged Synods, or by a respectable number of the ministers or churches connected with the General Synod, he may convene the delegates of the General Synod in special session. In case the business of the Secretary becomes too burdensome for one person to execute, he shall, with the concurrence of the Secretary, appoint an Assistant Secretary, and make known to him what portion of the labor he is to undertake.

SEC. 3. The Secretary shall keep a journal of the proceedings, write, attest, and take care of all the documents and writings, publish the time and place of the meeting of the Synod in the papers of the church, at least two months beforehand, and, in case of a special meeting, he shall give written notice thereof to the President of each of the District

Synods, immediately upon the issue of the call for such special meeting.

SEC. 4. The Treasurer shall receive and disburse all moneys of the Synod, and shall keep a faithful account of the same, which must be submitted at each meeting of the General Synod. At its pleasure he may also be required to give bond and security for the faithful performance of his trust. He shall pay out moneys only in pursuance of a resolution of Synod, or upon an order of the President attested by the Secretary.

SEC. 5. Should any officer of the Synod, in the intermediate time of the assembling of the body, depart this life, resign his office, or become incapable of executing the same, then the remaining officers shall appoint some capable and faithful man in his place, until the next meeting of the General Synod.

ARTICLE IV.

The General Synod, as the highest Ecclesiastical Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches connected with it through their District Synods, shall have the control of all those interests of the Church which are of a general character. The powers more specifically intrusted to the General Synod are chiefly the following:

SECTION 1. The General Synod shall examine the proceedings of the District Synods belonging to it, in order that it may obtain a knowledge of the existing state of the Church; and it may publish the statistics of the Church, and reports on the state of religion, with such plans and recommendations for the promotion of the kingdom of Christ, at home and abroad, as it shall deem proper. The District Synods shall, therefore, transmit to it regularly several copies of the proceedings of their annual conventions.

SEC. 2. The General Synod shall be charged with the duty of providing the books or writings to be used in the public worship of the Church, and in the catechetical instruction of the young, such as Liturgies, Hymn Books, and Catechisms; and no District Synod shall, without the sanction of the General Synod, publish or recommend books of this kind other than those furnished by the General Synod.

SEC. 3. The General Synod, as the representative body of all the Synods connected therewith, shall make provision

for the general missionary and benevolent operations of the Church, such as Home and Foreign Missions, Church Extension, providing a Church Literature, founding and maintaining institutions for the support of poor and disabled ministers and their widows and orphans, and other general benevolent and charitable institutions. It shall use all its power and means to unite, foster, and make efficient these operations of the Church.

SEC. 4. To accomplish these ends, the General Synod shall, whenever deemed practicable and expedient, create and perpetuate such Boards of Managers as it may consider necessary efficiently to carry forward these operations of the Church, and determine the number of members of each, and the time of their continuance in office, and assign to each Board its appropriate work and duties. These Boards shall always be subject to and under the control of the General Synod.

SEC. 5. Each Board thus created, acting under the control and by the authority of the General Synod, shall make the regulations necessary for the management of its own affairs, shall appoint its own officers, shall keep full and correct minutes of its proceedings, and shall make report of the same at each meeting of the General Synod. For the greater security of the funds and property which may at any time be intrusted to these Boards, any one or all of them shall, at the request of the General Synod, obtain acts of incorporation, and the Treasurers of the same shall give suitable bonds for the faithful performance of their duties.

SEC. 6. The General Synod may also institute and create a treasury for the efficient advancement of its purposes.

SEC. 7. The General Synod shall also advise the adoption of such rules and regulations among the several Synods as may prevent unpleasant and unfriendly collisions that might otherwise arise out of any difference of opinion existing among them, or from any other causes, and it shall apply all its powers, prayers, and means for the prevention of schisms among us—it shall be sedulously and incessantly regardful of the circumstances of the times, and of every casual rise and progress of unity of sentiment among Christians in general in order that the blessed opportunities to promote concord and unity, and the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, may not pass by neglected and unavailing

SEC. 8. The General Synod may give advice or opinion, when complaints shall be brought before them, by whole Synods, Ministeriums, Congregations, or individual ministers or laymen, concerning doctrine or discipline. They shall, however, be extremely careful that the consciences of ministers of the gospel be not burdened with human inventions, laws, or devices, and that no one be oppressed by reason of differences of opinion on non-fundamental doctrines.

SEC. 9. If differences of Synods be referred, the votes thereon shall be taken by Synods, and the referring Synods shall have no vote.

ARTICLE V.

The order of business shall be regulated by the By-Laws and Standing Rules, except as follows:

SECTION 1. A majority of Delegates appearing with proper credentials shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

SEC. 2. The General Synod shall appoint, by ballot, the time and place of the next convention; observing, at all times, however, that one meeting, at least, be held every two years.

ARTICLE VI.

SECTION 1. The General Synod may make whatever By-Laws it may deem necessary, provided only that they do not contradict the spirit of this Constitution.

SEC. 2. No alteration of this Constitution shall be made, except by the consent of two-thirds of the Synods attached to the General Synod. An exact copy of the intended alterations must be sent by the Secretary to the Presidents of the District Synods in connection with this body, with the request that they submit them to their respective Synods for decision. And if, at the subsequent meeting of the General Synod, it shall appear from their minutes that two-thirds of the District Synods are in favor of the alterations, they shall be declared adopted.